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Vol. I

EXTREE NICK, THE NEW YORK NEWSBOY.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "Billy Bakkus," "Barnum's Boy Ben," "Sassy Sam Sumner," etc., etc.



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Extree Nick, the New York Newsboy.

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Author of "Sassy Sam," "Billy Bakkus," "Sassy Sam Sumner," "Barnum's Boy Ben," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

THE newsboys were piled ten deep on the steps of the basement where the evening papers were being prepared for delivery, when an excited woman came rushing up to the crowd clustered about the mouth of the place, shouting:

"Where's Nick Newcome? Where's Nick Newcome?"

Nick, a smart specimen of a New York newsboy, with a round, sassy, apple-face, was down on the front row of the steps, ready to receive the first batch of papers; so when the woman repeated her inquiry, thinking that "der fellers" were making an April fool of him, he refused to budge, saying:

"Oh, stow it! Yer don't fool Nick!" when the messenger parted the hindmost of the crowd, and, looking down the basement stairs, screamed:

"You, Nick, come right home—your father's killed!"

"How?" he cried, recognizing the voice of the woman who washed for his parent; then, turning deadly pale, added: "Yer foolin' me, Miss Sanders!"

Dropping his newspaper check, he scrambled over the bodies of his companions and with terror-stricken face followed his guide; while the rest of the boys watched his retreat and commented upon his misfortune.

A year previously Nick had lost his mother, as good a woman as ever drew breath; and now an accident, in demolishing a ruined building on Broadway, had deprived him of his father.

Upon arriving in the wretched room he had heretofore called home, he found it filled with people, who, upon seeing him drew back, whispering:

"Here's his boy!"

On the straw bed in the corner of the apartment rested his father, still in death, with his poor limbs crushed and his form crimsoned with life-blood.

At first the boy was afraid to approach him, but after awhile he timidly drew near, turned back the sheet placed over the body, and stealing his arm around the upturned face, kissed the cold lips.

"Why don't he cry?" demanded one of the women of Mrs. Sanders. "He don't seem at all cut up?"

Poor Nick, his heart was too full of sorrow, and the luxury of tears was beyond his command, but the words tortured him, and, turning to the speaker, he said:

"Yer jes' clear, all ov yer! D'ye hear! If yer don't yer a lot of brutes!"

Slowly, as though regretting to quit the place, the crowd filtered out, observing to one another:

"What a little cuss Nick is! He won't come to any good, you'll see," etc., etc., to all of which the boy made no reply.

When the last stranger had departed, Mrs. Sanders said:

"I'll go into my room now, Nick. Leave the door open; if you want me, call. Will you take a mug of tea?"

"But the lad only shook his head, and, when she had retired, hastily bolted the door, then threw himself upon the bed by the side of his dead parent.

Poor fellow, he hardly knew what he did, sorrow having numbed his senses.

At length, when all was still, he whispered:

"Father!" then paused in order to hear a reply, but none came; and he, for the first time, realized that the rough, hard-working man, who had loved him so tenderly, was dead; whereupon he gradually began to sob, and tears coursed down his cheeks.

Presently a rap came at the door, and he heard a gentle voice say:

"Nick, may I come in?"

It was Josie Perry, a girl who lived in the same tenement, and who, like himself, sold newspapers and tried to earn her own living.

Rising, he crept towards the door, unbolted it and said:

"What yer want, Josie?"

"To help yer, Nick," she answered. "Big Jemmy found yer check, an' got yer papers, an' he sold 'em for yer. Here's der nickels," with which she dived her hand into her pocket and fished out a fist full of pennies.

"Come in, Josie," he said, endeavoring to check his sobs. "Yer real kind."

The girl followed him in, then, noticing the outline of the corpse—for by that time it was twilight—started back, saying:

"I'm afraid, Nick!"

"He won't hurt yer," quietly replied her companion, the choke once more rising in his throat. "Did yer ever know him ter harm anybody, Josie?" when he broke down, and, seating himself by the table, gave full vent to his sorrow.

"Come, Nick," she at length said, "don't yer give way. Yer know yerallus treated der ole man bully."

But still he wept on.

About eight o'clock an undertaker came into the room, a big, beerfilled brute, about half intoxicated.

"Well," he cried striking a match upon the door-post, "where's the stiff?"

"Yer oughter be ashamed of yerself," indignantly observed Josie, while Nick buried his face in his sleeves and did not reply.

"Look ahea," snarled the fellow, who was one of those harpies that live by preying upon the poor in their time of deepest sorrow, "did yer old man belong to a club?"

"No!" exclaimed Mrs. Sanders, who had been listening at the partition which divided the rooms. "Mr. Newcome didn't believe in clubs!"

"Got any money?" demanded the man.

"No!" said Nick, raising his head, for the intruder's tones jarred on his soul. "No, father give me all he had this morning; his wages ain't been paid for three weeks, an' he owes his rent."

"Then he must go to the Potter's Field," bullied the man.

"If he'd bin saving and belonged to a club he'd have bin buried decently. If I'd ha' known he was a pauper I wouldn't have troubled to come," with which he spat upon the floor and walked out of the room.

When he was gone, Nick raised his head, saying:

"Josie, what's he mean by pauper?"

"Th—th—that," sobbed the girl, "yer haven't enough stamps ter pay fur his funeral. He can't be buried wid yer mother."

Just then a noise in the street attracted their attention, and they heard a faint cry of:

"Extree! Full 'count ob de terrible railway accident!"

Rising, he dried his tears, and, placing the pennies in his pocket, motioned her to come with him; then locking the door, descended to the street.

In ten minutes he had his arm full of papers, and was shouting:

"Yar—here's yar extree! Full 'count ob de drefle accedent!"

CHAPTER II.

TOM M'NALLY.

As Nick rushed up Broadway, he saw a young man looking the door of one of the offices, so, darting across to him, he cried:

"Extree, boss, full 'count ob de—"

When the clerk, whose name was Tom McNally, observed that he was weeping.

Tom was a whole-souled, generous fellow, and the sight of real distress always moved him, so he paused and said:

"Somebody been licking you, bubby?"

"I'd like ter see any one dat would make me cry," answered Nick, wiping his eyes with the cuff of his jacket. "Won't yer buy an extree, boss? Full 'count ob de drefle accedent; only two cents."

"If you will tell me why you are weeping, I will," said Tom, grabbing the boy by the collar.

"Boss," sobbed Nick, for his captor's voice sounded kindly, "don't yer hinder me; my father's lying dead at home," pointing to some blackened debris across the road. "I ain't lying, boss." Here the sight of the spot where his parent had met his sad fate so affected Nick that he seated himself upon the steps leading to the office, and, bowing his head, once more gave vent to his anguish.

He was only what is termed a common newsboy—a street Arab—clad in a tattered jacket and an old pair of men's pants, barefooted and grimy, but Tom McNally did not mind this, and when Nick became somewhat composed and rose to go about his business, the young man said:

"Where do you live, soany?"

"In Pearl street," answered Nick. "Say, boss, won't yer buy an extree? I want ter sell enough ter bury my father along wid my mother."

"If your story is true," said Tom, "and, mind you, I don't wish to doubt it, I'll help you."

"True!" cried the newsboy. "Boss, der yer think I'd lie about my poor father—do yer?"

"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings," quickly answered Tom. "Come, what's your name? I'll see if I can't furnish you with money enough to bury your parent. I have been sold several times, and you mustn't think me hard on you."

"Bless yer, boss!" said the lad, feeling comforted by Tom's kindly voice. "I knows yer means well, but I'm chock full of misery. My name is Nick Newcome. This way—it ain't very far to our house."

As they neared the place, Josie rushed up to him, saying:

"Give me dem extrees, Nick! I've sold mine, an' am waitin' fur another edition—dey're goin' like hot cakes!"

Handing her his heap, he turned to his new friend and observed:

"She's a bully gal, is Josie! She's got a heart as big as a giantess!" then motioned him to follow.

Tom was one of those good men who help their fellow-creatures without advertising what they do; a practical friend to all in distress. For several weeks he had been working overtime, at law-writing, intending to use the money in taking a trip to Niagara, but the sight of the dead man and the boy's grief moved him so greatly that he put aside his holiday and devoted his earnings to the orphan.

"Nick," he whispered, as the poor lad reverently replaced the sheet over his parent's face, "I'll bury your father. I am not rich, so everything must be plain, but you will have the satisfaction of knowing that he does not lie in the Potter's Field."

"Boss, gratefully answered the newsboy, "may yer never know what trouble is. Yer a bully man, yer are, an' I'll work hard ter pay yer back."

"I don't wish you to do that," quickly replied Tom. "I believe you are a good lad, and it is my duty to help my brother in distress."

"My father wasn't yer brother," ejaculated Nick.

"My boy," said Tom, "all honest men are my brothers. There, be comforted; you will get along in the world," with which he turned to re-

fire, when Mrs. Sanders entered and told him where he could find a respectable undertaker.

By ten o'clock the body was decently coffined, and Tom informed the orphan that the next morning he would accompany him to the cemetery.

We often hear that there is no good in the world, and that nowadays it's "every one for himself," but, thank Heaven, there are a few Tom McNallys among us.

Towards midnight a crowd of newsboys began to collect in the room, all of them anxious to show their sympathy for their friend.

"He must be a bully man dat bought yer dis coffin," whispered Big Jemmy, thrusting a paper of pop-corn into Nick's hand. "Where's der funeral goin' ter be?"

The lad informed him, and Jemmy said he would be there, and that a crowd of newsboys would accompany him, then volunteered to remain during the night.

Just as they stretched themselves upon the straw-bed, Josie knocked lightly at the door, saying:

"There's two dollars fifteen for you, Nick; I sold three editions for yer."

The boy rose, and, opening the door, hastily told her of his good fortune in meeting Tom, then, thanking her for her kindness, retired to think over his sorrow.

Jemmy was dead tired, so he soon fell asleep, but for a long time Nick could not close his eyes.

When he awoke it was broad daylight, and Mrs. Sanders was calling him to breakfast.

True to his word, Tom McNally borrowed a buggy of a friend and drove the orphan to the cemetery; the hearse having gone on ahead.

Upon arriving at the chapel, they found a large party of newsboys who had walked every step of the way, five miles, in order to show their regards for their chum. The last prayers were said, and rites performed, and, with a breaking heart, Nick watched the coffin descend to its resting-place beside the mother whom he had loved so well, while the clustering crowd sobbed sympathetically and sorrowed sincerely for his loss.

"Boss," he said, as he accompanied his friend back to the buggy, "I'd rader walk home wid der boys. God bless yer fur yer kindness. I shall begin der world wid a lighter heart, for sometimes I kin come out here an' see where - he - is."

Then, wringing his companion's hand, turned to rejoin his chums.

"Nick," said Tom, "I'm real glad that I had the means of doing you this little act of friendship. Here is my address; come and see me sometimes," with which he handed him a card, and, mounting the vehicle, drove off.

The boys did all they could to cheer the orphan, and Big Jemmy treated him to some root beer, saying:

"Yer in luck, I tell yer. Dat extree edertion did der big fur yer."

Then, turning to the newsboys, said:

"Say, s'pose we call him Extree Nick?"

"That's a bully name!" they shouted, and from that day the orphan was known by this title.

Full of life, and, when his grief was somewhat abated, as jolly as a sand-boy, Extree Nick tackled fate, struggled like a little man, and, as the reader will learn, experienced a number of comical adventures, he being always ahead with his papers and cry of:

"Yar—here's yar extree!"

CHAPTER III.

EXTREE TO THE RESCUE.

Two years passed, during which Extree Nick had contrived to boom along quite nicely, sometimes varying his business by selling fruit and blacking boots.

He was by this time quite a big lad, being fifteen years old, and, as he did not expect to be a newsboy all his life, began to look about for something else to do.

The superintendent of the Home had done his best to get him some regular occupation, but there were so many youngsters wanting places, and so few vacancies, that his friend had not been able to obtain anything for him.

One morning, when he and Big Jemmy were seated on the dark steps of the fourth floor of the *Herald* building, one of the boys said:

"Josie Perry is in luck."

"How?" demanded Nick, who always took a great interest in his friend, and who looked upon her as his girl.

"Well, yer see," answered the boy, "she hooked an ole woman from under a horse's feet in Broadway, an' der olegal give her a hundred

dollars, an' Josie's folks have bin on der spree ever since."

"Heard dat her ole man half killed Josie dis morning," said another newsboy.

"Did he?" said Nick, rising and pretending not to pay very particular attention to their conversation; but he failed to deceive them, and presently, as he began to descend the stairs, Big Jemmy called out:

"Goin' ter see yer mash?"

"Whose mash?" he demanded.

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot," grinned Jemmy.

"T'ink we ain't seen yer walkin' Josie out Sunday?"

"Nick'll do der trick," cried another. "Yer'll see him drive her out in a hack some day, an' us boys runnin' 'longside hollerin': 'Extree! full 'count ob de extree weddin'!"

Nick chuckled over this, and determined to sell them a trick; so, after waiting awhile, he rushed up the steps, shouting:

"Boys, boys! hurry—extree out! Come 'long!" then turned and darted down-stairs, followed by the newsboys, crying:

"Where—where?"

Nick dodged across the road to the Astor House, then doubled and ran over the way to the City Hall Park, after which he darted across to the *Sun* building and halted, when up panted Big Jemmy, saying:

"Where's der extree out?"

"Here!" he shrieked, indicating himself; "I'm der last extree out! One ob yer said I could do der trick, an' I've done it;" with which he threw a somerset, and walked off on his ear, leaving Jemmy to inform the other newsboys of his joke.

As he was resuming a perpendicular position, he observed Tom McNally, who had prospered in the world, and was looking remarkably well.

Tom had always remembered him, and had done the boy many kindnesses; so, on beholding his friend, he paused, saying:

"Glad ter see yer, boss."

"Ah, Extree Nick," smilingly answered the gentleman. "I want to see you. How is business?"

"Putty hunk," answered the boy. "Yer see, boss, I'm gettin' on in der world. I wants a news-stand."

"I have taken the first floor of a building on Broadway," observed Tom. "There's a recess between the windows where you can put in a board and start a stand right away. It's on my ground, and when I'm fixed, I'll have a news-stand built for you, and it will be your fault if you don't make a fortune."

"Yer mean it, Mr. Tom?" he cried. "Yer ain't foolin' me, are yer?"

"No," replied his friend; "come along;" with which he led him across to Broadway and pointed to a handsome ground floor, on the windows of which he saw, in golden letters:

"PORTABLE GAS COMPANY (LIMITED),

THOMAS McNALLY, Secretary."

Nick had learned to read at the Newsboys' Home, and could write quite a nice hand.

Procuring a board, he covered it with a piece of oilcloth, and fixed it in the recess as a shelf. Then he hustled off to the News Company and procured his stock of papers, after which he ran back and opened store.

Being right on a corner, he sold out rapidly, and by the time the evening journals were out was ready for a new stock.

"Well!" said Mr. Tom, as we shall in future call him, "do you think you got a good stand?"

"If I only had a pardner, you know," replied Extree. "I could do jes splendid."

Mr. Tom looked thoughtful, then said:

"If you knew of a boy like yourself, I shouldn't mind; but your chum, Jemmy, as you call him, uses such bad language, and smokes, and"—when Extree interrupted with:

"I know, Mr. Tom, yer don't like cussin'. I've dropped it 'cos yer said it was bad. I don't know any of our crowd I could ask ter help me here," musingly. "Wish I did; I could earn three dollars a day."

"Well," said his friend, "I tell you what it is, Extree. If you can find some nice, clever, well-spoken boy, like yourself, I will have this space inclosed and fixed for you, and be your security with the News Company!"

"Thank yer kindly," answered the boy, scratching his head. "I guess I kin find some one ter suit."

When the office closed, Extree bent his way towards his old residence, and ascending to the top floor, paused; inside he could hear a man swearing and a girl sobbing.

"Give it me, you huzzy, give it me!" said the brute. "Give it me, hear, or I'll kill you?"

"Oh, father!" pleaded a gentle voice, "let me pay the rent and take my things out of pawn! I

ain't fit to go into the street. If I was only decent I could get a good place!"

Since the night that she sold the papers for Extree and comforted him, Josie had been to evening school, and had learned to talk as a young girl should; at the same time she had not been able to rise above the poverty of her surroundings, her parents being slaves to the demon of intemperance.

As she replied to her father, Extree placed his fingers upon the latch and was about to enter, when Perry uttered a fearful expression, and, seizing the stove-lifter, rushed at his daughter, crying:

"I'll have yer life!"

In an instant Extree threw open the door and springing between the monster and his child, said:

"Drop it—hear?"

"Drop *fwat*?" insultingly demanded the brute.

"That ther stove-lifter!" said the boy slowly. "I mean it!"

Nick was tall and strong for his age, and was defending the girl of his heart.

"Yez," began the drunken fiend, rushing at him with the weapon uplifted, when he darted in, grasped Perry by the waist, and, disarming the would-be murderer, landed him in a wash-tub half filled with hot suds, which stood in the far corner of the room.

Rising, dripping, from his involuntary hot bath, the man uttered an oath, saying:

"Give me that lifter—hear?"

Extree raised the window and pitched the weapon into the yard below, then turning to the man, said:

"Give it yer to knock my brains out wid? Not much. Yer don't fool Nick!"

CHAPTER IV.

JOE RUDOLPH.

As Extree was defying Perry, the man's wife, who had hereto been slumbering, awoke and rubbed her eyes, murmuring:

"Josie, dear!"

"Well, mother?" said the girl, who was all of a tremble.

"Give me the bottle, darlin'?" whispered the woman; hearing which the man, who had been eying Nick from head to foot, turned to his worse half, saying:

"Ye can't have another drop! Sure, yez own chile tells yez she wants the stamps heaven has sint us to clothe her foiner carcass wid! America is a great country—sure our childher larn to spake foiner, an' the devil may take their parints!"

"Oh, father! father! how can you talk so?" cried Josie. "You know I'd die for you!"

"Hear her!" sneered the brute. "She ses she'd die for us, an' won't give us the price av a pint! Oh, begorra, yez a foiner daughter, wid yer grand spache and larnin'; sure, yez wants another taste av the sthick."

On hearing this Nick flushed, and, turning to the girl, said:

"Yer come outer dis; 'taint no place for yer, Josie." Whereupon the woman rose, and staggering towards the child, screamed:

"Give me the money and go, ye vixen. Go wid him, and never put yez fut on my flure again!"

Turning to her parents, the indignant girl said:

"Mother—father—if the dirty money would do you any good, you might have it; but it will only make you sin more. I'll go, because I can't stay with you—can't stand your ill-treatment, and because it's best. You've turned me out of doors time and again. I've slept on the stairs many a night. My learning has taught me that if I do what is right I am as good as any woman living—as any finely-dressed girl in this city—"

"Yer a derved deal better den any," put in Extree, who had listened to her with deep attention. "Yer come wid me, Josie. I'll get yer a home."

"Och, sure, and yez have run after him enough!" cried Mrs. Perry. "Yez have forced him to have yez!"

"Mother!" proudly returned the girl, "when you were in the old country—before you took to drink, did any one ever say such a thing to you as you have to me? Extree ain't going to marry me; we're only a boy and a girl."

"Yer bet I'll marry you some day," muttered Nick.

"Och! don't yez thry to desave me," sneered the woman. "I know yez, yez Amerikin! I wash my hands av yez. Sure, an' I belave yez a changeling. No girl wid de thrue dhrup in her blood would turn agin her parents and refuse to lind 'em a trifle av dirty rags. Go, ye crayter, or I'll put me curse upon yez!"

As she uttered these words her husband, who had been listening to her in drunken silence, began a fearful imprecation on his child; but, ere

he could utter two words, Nick confronted him, crying:

"Hold on, hear! This yer own flesh and blood; if yer curse her yer won't die in yer bed; hear?" But the man recommenced, so, as Josie fled in terror, Extree seized the pair of wet stockings that Perry had just taken off, and, rushing at the brute, knocked him sprawling; then crammed them into his mouth, shouting:

"Dern yer, stop! If yer wasn't Josie's father I'd make yer eat dem! Yer don't deserve such an angel for a kid." Then, turning to follow the girl, added:

"Look ahea. If yer tries to interfere wid Josie, elder ob yer, I'll fix yer—hear? I'll take care of her. See?"

Then, amid the horrible wishes of the drunken pair, he darted down the stairs and rejoined Josie, who was in the hall of the next floor sobbing as though her heart would break.

"Oh, Extree," she said, "I can't leave 'em! They'll die if I aint with them. Neither of them will work."

"Dey won't, hey?" said the newsboy, chuckling. "Dey wants yer ter run roun' der streets sellin' papers, an' fur dem to drink ud your earnin's, hey? Well, dey won't get it! Nick'll do der trick; jes' yer come along, Josie."

"But—I'm afraid, Extree," she faltered, meaning that she considered it wrong to leave her parents; but Nick, taking it as an expression of doubt with regard to himself, although secretly knowing she loved him, said:

"Yer afraid of me, Josie? Pshaw! yer jokin'! Yer afraid of de boy as would give his right hand ter save yer from ill treatment. Afraid ob me, arter all yer've done fur me? Oh, Josie, d'ye think I've forgot der awful night when my poor father died?"

"Hush, hush, Extree," she sobbed. "Afraid of you? No, indeed. I'd trust you anyway. What I meant was, ain't it wrong for me to leave father and mother? Would you have done so, Extree, dear?"

She had never thus addressed him, and he scarcely knew how to reply; but, finally taking her trembling hand, whispered:

"Look ahea, Josie, my father and mother wasn't der same as yer parents, hea? My mother—"

But he could not complete the sentence, and leaning against the wall, buried his face on his sleeve, while Josie turned her head aside and sobbed in sympathy.

Since the night that she sold his extras for him, he had never referred to his father's fate; although she knew that he often went out to the cemetery, and that the grave which contained the newsboy's parents was kept neat; and that out of his hard earnings Nick had purchased two rose bushes for it, which he attended with great care.

After awhile Extree conquered his sorrow, and turning to his companion, said:

"Look ahea, Josie, yer a bully gal to stick up fur yer folks; but yer ain't doin' dem no good hea. I knows a boy named Joe Rudolph; he's a real nice chap, is Joe; his mother will let you live wid her till I kin get you somethin' ter do. Yer must call yerself Josie Newcome—see? Den when yer wants, yer kin help yer folks; but, Josie, take my advice, let 'em help demselves a little—savvy?"

"Guess I'll try it, Extree," she said, and away they went down the well-worn stairs, the boy telling her about his luck, and between them building a bright future.

Going up-town as far as Canal street, they found Mrs. Rudolph's house, and Nick soon arranged about temporary accommodation for Josie.

While they were chatting, Joe came in singing, and seeing the visitors, cried:

"What, Extree! How do yer do?"

"I'm sproutin'," laughingly answered the boy. "What yer doin', Joe?"

"Outer luck," said the new-comer, an honest little chap who only wanted a chance in the world. "I'm helpin' mother."

"He's a good boy," said Mrs. Rudolph. "I wish times would improve; as it is, a small specimen like Joe gets crowded out."

Extree thought awhile, then said:

"'Spose I give yer a lift, Joe?"

"Under der ear?" grinned the boy, winking at his mother. "Is dat der way ter carry on afore ladies?"

"Oh, close yer nap," smilingly answered Extree. "Yer oughter know me better. How would yer like ter go inter biz wid me?"

"Yer blowin'," murmured Joe.

"I'll tell yer what I'll do," continued Nick; "I've got a chance in der world, an' I want's a pardner."

"There's your boy," said Mrs. Rudolph, point-

ing at her son. "He's small, but he's smart, and he'll stick to you and be true and honest."

"That's me said Joe. "Extree, if yer want a pard, I'm wid yer."

The newsboy smiled at Josie, and holding out his hand to his friend, said:

"If der boss as owns der office will pass yer, I'll give yer a quarter of my profits. I'm bound ter run der biz. Nick'll do der trick."

CHAPTER V.

STARTING A NEWS-STAND.

WHEN Extree retired that night, he could not sleep for thinking of his good luck.

It was his last night in the Newsboys' Home, and from the next morning he was to begin a fresh departure.

"Mr. Tom is a real good man," he mused. "Goddern it, I'll try ter show him I'm grateful."

"Got der nightmare?" demanded Big Jemmy, who occupied the next bed. "What yer chinnin' 'bout, Extree?"

Nick told him of his good fortune; then, as the sounds in the street below died into silence, he gradually slumbered.

The next morning he was up bright and early, and when the office opened he spread his papers, and, upon seeing a likely customer hurrying by, shouted:

"Here yer are, mornin' papers, illustrated weeklies, boss! BOYS WEEKLY—buy a copy fer yer son, boss, an' read it yourself; it's tuly!"

As most keepers of news-stands wait for their clients to speak to them, folks noticed this; and, as Nick had a bright, sassy way with him, he did a rattling trade.

He had arranged that Joe should be on hand about nine o'clock, and when he had came he handed him a sheaf of morning papers, saying:

"Trot up Broadway an' try yer luck!" when away Joe started, yelling:

"Here yar—New York *Herald*, *World*, *Times* an' *Tribune*!" while Extree looked after him, thinking:

"You'll do, bubby."

About ten o'clock Mr. Tom arrived, and when he had read his letters he sent for Nick.

"Extree," he began, "have you found a partner?"

Nick nodded, saying:

"Got a bully one—Joe Rudolph! He's small; but I tell yer, boss, he's mighty smart."

"You're satisfied with him, hey?"

"Satisfied!" he cried; "why, Mr. Tom, I thinks almost as much ob him as I does ob yerself!"

His friend laughed, then inquired:

"Why did you not let him commence right away?"

"Boss," he answered, "yer don't think Extree would be so imperdint as ter set on a boy afore yer'd said he'd do, hey?"

"You're right, Extree!" replied Mr. Tom. "Always find out if what you are instructed to do do for any one pleases them. Do you understand, my boy?"

"I savvey," grinned Nick. "Be sure you're right, den go ahead—dat's me, boss."

At eleven o'clock Joe returned, he having sold all his stock.

Extree took the money and introduced him to Mr. Tom, who said that he would do, after which Nick told him to take his place by the papers while he went down to the News Company.

During his absence a carpenter arrived with a black walnut news-stand, which he fitted into the niche between the windows.

It was a regular glass box, and had evidently been built for the place.

Joe eyed him as he fixed the shelves, and when it was completed, Mr. Tom came out to inspect it, then demanded:

"Where's the sign?"

"Oh, I forgot that," answered the man, sending off his mate for the article.

"Dis yere's been put up here before, hasn't it?" inquired Joe. "I remember seein' ob it—"

Just then a man passed, who, noticing the stand, addressed the boy with:

"Think yer goin' to run that?"

"Guess so," quietly replied the lad.

"Who does it belong to?" asked the fellow.

"Extree Nick has got the privilege," said Joe. The man scowled and passed on.

"Do you know who he is?" demanded the carpenter.

"No," returned Joe.

"He's the man who busted the last stand here—this one," whispered the mechanic. "He owns a number of stands in this city and Brooklyn, and lets them out. If a boy starts an opposition, he inquires into his character; if bad, he has an easy time getting him out, for no one wants a thief keeping a stand in front of their store; if

good, he writes postal cards and lies them out of it."

"He's a darned mean snoozer!" excitedly answered Joe. "Let him try it on Extree Nick—he'll get it hot, I tell yer. Yer don't fool Nick."

"Is he on the square?" asked the man.

Joe's face was a study of mingled sneer and pity.

"Is Extree square?" he cried. "Yer bet he is! Do you think because he's a newsboy he's a thief, hey? I tell yer, mister, we're a deal honister dan many folks who call themselves politicians. We goes for what we kin decently earn, not what we kin steal."

The man laughed, and seeing his mate arrive with the sign, dropped the conversation, then recommenced work.

When the newsboy returned to the office he beheld the stand, above which was a black board bearing these words:

EXTREE NICK!

THE NEW YORK NEWSBOY.

BUY "THE BOYS' WEEKLY."

Joe, sold clear out, was standing behind the counter, and Mr. Tom was watching him from his private room.

Extree smiled, then nodding at his pard, went straight into the outer office and asked to see Mr. McNally.

"Come in, Nick!" said his friend. "What do you think of your stand?"

The newsboy entered the inner room, but for several moments could not command himself sufficiently to reply; then, when he had overcome his emotion, hoarsely said:

"Boss, what has Extree done to yer dat yer treats him so splendid?"

"Nick!" replied his friend, "you have been honest, have never forgotten your dead parents, have tried to help yourself; keep on this way and you will succeed."

"Yer bet I will!" fervently answered the lad. "But, Mr. Tom, der rent ob dat stand will take all my profit?"

"The rent?" answered the other. "Yes, you will feel more independent if you pay. Extree—I will charge you two dollars a month, and take it out in papers!"

"I'll give yer a *Herald*, daily," cried the newsboy, "an der Boys' WEEKLY, an'——" here he paused, then said: "What will yer take for der balance ob der rent?"

"I've some boy and girl friends at my boarding-house," smilingly returned Mr. Tom. "Give me a couple of papers for them?"

"I'll fix yer!" he laughingly ejaculated. "I'll deliver der Boys' WEEKLY! I tell yer, Mr. Tom, if a boy or gal don't like dem dere's somethin' wrong 'bout dem kids, an' yer oughter call in a doctor."

Mr. McNally agreed to this, saying that would be enough, and Nick withdrew to his stand, where he and Joe shook hands.

"Ain't it jes' splendid?" cried his pard. "Glass shutters, cupboard for stock, good floor ter keep our feet warm, black walnut fixings, and yer name as big as life. I tell yer, Extree, it's just fust-class!" saying which he informed his chum what the carpenter had told him.

"I knows der cuss!" said Nick. "He's a tall, pale, sick-looking purp; looks as if he'd been swallowed by a shark an' chucked up agin as pisinous."

"Carpenter says he's dangerous," observed Joe.

Extree chuckled; then pointing to a hand-cart, that had just arrived from the News Company, said:

"Dere's our fust stock, Joe—dump it in, an' I'll stow it; an' as fur dat boss stand owner, let him try his hand at me! School he can't fool Nick."

CHAPTER VI.

BUDD KETCHUM.

EXTREE NICK's news-stand made quite a sensation in the profession, his friends feeling glad, and his enemies mad, while the boys pitched in and soon gained a good share of trade.

Joe proved a treasure; and Josie, free from the ill treatment of her parents, grew more beautiful every day.

She was living as parlor-maid in a big house on Madison avenue, so Nick seldom saw her; but, knowing that she was well, rested content.

Sometimes she would visit Mrs. Rudolph's, and Nick would walk part of the way home with her,

though he never called at the house where she lived.

Every Sunday, after the morning papers were out, Extree would start for the cemetery, and kneel by his parents' grave.

He said that it did him good, and that he never felt the long, weary, dusty tramp there and back; so week after week passed, and the rose-bushes he had planted lost their leaves, and were protected by him with a covering of old bass matting, after which the snow came.

Strange to say, the man who had asked about Nick, and of whom the carpenter had warned them, never annoyed them, and the boy laughed at the story, but the wretch was on their track.

One day a flashily-dressed young fellow bought a sporting paper of Nick, and entered into conversation with him, at length informing the boy that he was a stranger from Philadelphia, and that he was looking for a quiet boarding-house.

Being rather taken with him, Extree gave the man the address of his lodging, which was in a street leading off West Broadway, saying:

"Guess der lady will board yer; she's a real smart woman." After which he thought no more of it.

About noon, as the newsboys were eating their dinner, the young man peeped over the counter, saying:

"I've fixed it, Extree; come and take a glass of lager?"

"An' muddle my head for biz?" said Nick, glancing up. "No, thankee."

"It's cold, anyhow," smilingly continued the stranger; "come and take a cup of hot coffee."

Not liking to disoblige, and feeling somewhat chilly, Nick complied, and crossing Broadway, they walked on until they came to a dime restaurant, where they entered, and his new friend, who said his name was Budd Ketchum, ordered rolls and milk for two.

He seemed such a cheerful, good-hearted fellow, that Extree took to him, and they soon became great friends.

When they had partaken of their meal they returned to the news-stand, and Budd walked inside, saying that he had plenty of time, and liked to see Joe sell papers; but the latter didn't cotton to him, and when he was gone told Nick that his friend was a beat.

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot!" grinned Extree.

Joe laughed, but did not feel happy. It was the first time that his partner had ever taken to an outsider, and the little chap read Budd Ketchum like a book.

Ketchum, who did not seem to try to get employment, although always talking about it, became quite intimate with Nick, and the latter gradually yielded to his fascinating influence.

He little thought that the apparently young man was over forty, and that twenty years of his vile life had been spent in prison.

The Portable Gas Company prospered, and Tom McNally visited Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and California, where he established agencies; meanwhile winter had set in.

Broadway was filled with snow, and, out of business, Budd had become Extree's constant companion.

Strangely enough several stores near the Gas Company's office were broken into, and the police began to question Nick as to where he went evenings, but, as he generally stayed at home, his conscience was clear, so he thought no more of their inquiries.

In due time Mr. McNally returned from California, bringing a large amount of specie, which he temporarily deposited in the company's big safe.

That night, upon arriving home, Nick found Budd absent; but on a scrap of paper, inserted in the strap of his trunk, he discovered these words:

"Come up to Central Park to-night at eight. Outside Central Park Garden. We'll have a good old time with the boys."

"BUDD KETCHUM."

It was the first time that he had received a note; so he ate his supper and walked up town.

Upon reaching the designated spot a man who was evidently waiting to receive him, said:

"Budd sent me to fetch you—this way," then started for some shanties lower down the avenue, Extree following as innocent as a lamb.

Upon arriving at a tumble-down den, built of old packing cases, he paused, not liking the looks of the place.

"Step right in, Budd is there," said the man.

"No, yer don't," said Extree, preparing to bolt; when, in an instant, his guide had him by the throat, and he was thrust into a room among a lot of roughs, who grabbed, gagged and bound him.

"Keep still, and we won't hurt you," observed the fellow; "if you don't, you'll get your nut cracked."

As soon as he was secured the men left, and Nick, being tired, soon fell asleep.

Towards daybreak he awoke cold and stiff; however, by dint of chafing his bonds, he freed himself.

It was a cold bright morning—New Year's Day.

Rising, he quitted the hovel, and walked down town, scarcely meeting a soul on the way.

On reaching home, he crept up to bed, and did not wake until nine o'clock, when he rushed off down to his stand.

To his horror he found it in the possession of two policemen.

"Wot's der little game?" he said.

"Is your name Extree?" demanded one of the cops.

"Dat's my rally," he fearlessly replied.

"Come inside," ordered the officer.

Extree followed him in, when the man clapped a pair of bracelets on him, saying:

"I want you!"

CHAPTER VII.

SOLD BY THE DETECTIVES.

For some moment Extree was dumb with astonishment.

The big iron safe of the company was open and empty. A large hole had been cut from the news-stand into the office, and Nick's wrists were confined in handcuffs.

"Fixed you, you darned young skunk!" said the cop, a raw hand from New Jersey.

"You lump-headed, lager-lined swill cart!" indignantly returned the newsboy; "wot yer mean by servin' me this way, hey? I didn't do this job."

"I'm a detective!" bullied the man.

"Yer a thunderin' old woman!" said Nick. "Detective! So help me never, if I couldn't chalk a better detective nor you on a wall! What yer dropped on me fur, hey?"

"You're a thief!" said the officer.

"Yer a liar!" cried Extree, who was perfectly beside himself with passion. "It's just like yer blue points—yer kean't see an inch afore yersweiled noses! Yer got perlittical influence an' a long coat, wid a lot ob buttons on it, an' a locust shoved inter ye fist, an' den yer walks roun' an' ehums wid sports an' thieves; an' when dere's a robbery yer grabs a boy! Oh, yer a bully detective!"

Just then Joe arrived from up town, where he had been to summons Mr. McNally.

If Nick was indignant, his partner was raving mad.

"What yer 'bout a ironing, Extree?" he demanded.

"Oh, dry up," growled the cops. "We'll fix you if you don't."

While they were speaking, Mr. Tom arrived, and, upon seeing what had taken place, he almost fainted, saying:

"I am ruined!"

The morning papers had been all sold by Joe, who, on opening the stand, had discovered the burglary. He had, however, not been to the store cupboard, and now, on trying the lock, found that it had been forced.

Opening the door he beheld, packed snugly, six measure boxes—the contents of the big safe—but their stock of papers had vanished.

"There it—it—it is!" he excitedly stuttered.

"There, Mr. Tom, there's your money boxes."

"You don't say," cried Mr. McNally; but, sure enough, there were the exact number.

"Our mags and stock have vamoosed," said Joe. "I see der thieves have not had time ter take der heavy boxes. They've waltzed off wid our papers, and left de sugar behind dem."

As he was speaking the president of the company arrived with three detectives.

He was a fussy old man, who usually left everything to Mr. McNally; but now he took charge in a most muddle-headed fashion; and, treating Extree as a culprit, began to badger him most unmercifully, saying:

"I believe that you are at the bottom of this business."

"Yer out on der first base, boss!" quietly answered Nick.

"I'd stake my life on his honesty!" said Mr. Tom.

"Where were you last nigh night?" demanded one of the detectives.

"Where do you live—hey?" bullied another.

"What have you done with the stuff you removed from your locker?" asked a third, whereupon Extree turned his back on them, saying:

"Oh, take another clove, wipe out that fly speck, use your nose rag—find out! Ye'll make yer mother cry if yer exhibits any more ov yer darned ignorance?"

"I see!" knowingly observed the first detective. "Spiker, go and search his room!"

"Yes, go, Spiker!" jeered Nick; "go an' take anodder detective wid yer? Go all three ob yer an' find der man dat killed Nathan, der sport as kidnapped Charley Ross, and der indervidual dat struck Billy Patterson! Go and call on Bill Tweed an' borrow a stamp or two. Yer call yerselves detectives; why any newsboy in New York will buy yer at one end ob der street an' sell yer at de odder!"

"That will do, Nick," observed Mr. Tom. "I know you're innocent!"

"Sorry I spoke!" murmured Extree.

"This lad," said the president of the company, "is a very saucy fellow! Mr. McNally, you talked to me about buying me out. I will remain until I have punished this fellow, when I will send to you."

The company consisted of the inventor, who acted as president, and Tom, who had invested a legacy in the patent, and it was a genuine success.

In a few moments the detectives returned loaded with weeklies, magazines, and other papers, which they had found secreted under Extree's bed.

"You were out all night," said the chief officer, "and arrived home about six o'clock this morning!"

"I know I was!" cried Nick. "I was sold by a bogus letter, an' set on by a crowd in a shanty on Sixth avenue, an' tied."

"Oh, we understand," sneered the detective; then, turning to the officers, bade them take Extree to the Police Court, City Hall.

"Come, walk right along," said the cop, who had tried to pass himself off as a detective, but Extree laid down and refused to budge; so they were compelled to take him across to the police court, where a magistrate, who had been "visiting," said:

"I commit him for trial," and would not hear a word that the boy had to offer in defense.

As they led him from the room, Joe whispered:

"Extree, yer didn't do it—I know yer didn't!"

"Joe," he replied, "go an' see Josie, an' tell her dat dese mush-headed detectives have sworn my liberty away; and tell Budd Ketchum dat I'm innocent!" Then, seeing Mr. Tom, he asked:

"Yer don't think I'm guilty, do yer, boss?"

"In my heart, no!" quickly answered the gentleman. "I cannot think you would commit such a crime, Nick; but appearances are greatly against you."

"This way," said a policeman, grasping him by the collar. "You needn't act so green. The detectives have been watching you for weeks; and I've seen you here a dozen times!"

"Seed me here afore?" gasped poor Extree.

"Why—" but, ere he could finish the sentence, he was thrust into a cell, and the key turned on him. Raising his hands aloft, he cried: "Mother! mother! yer see how dey have served yer kid! Won't you ask der angels ter smile on me; yer know I's innocent, an' jes' so sure as I live I'll find der burglar an' bust dem lyin' detectives!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A MOST UNJUST VERDICT.

"NEW YEAR'S DAY, an' in a jug!" said Nick, as the warden's clock struck "one."

"There's a gal wants to see you!" growled a keeper, peeping in at the wicket. "Out you come, if you wish to see her."

Extree followed his jailer through the corridor and into a waiting-room, where he beheld Josie sobbing as though her heart would break, while little Joe Rudolph was doing his best to comfort her.

"Here's the prisoner!" said the turnkey. "Now you'd best be quick, as you're only allowed fifteen minutes' chat!"

Seeing Nick, Josie rushed towards him, saying:

"Extree, you're innocent! I know you are; yet, because I said so and wished to come to cheer you up, the lady where I live has told me to pack and leave!" with which she took both of his hands, and glancing lovingly through her tears, added: "But, I'd be turned away from a hundred places before I'd go back on you, Extree."

This made the newsboy's eyes moisten, and failing to find words, he drew the pretty girl towards him and right before the keeper and Joe, kissed her, whereupon the man wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, saying:

"Where's my share, sis?" Hearing which, Nick smiled and observed:

"Yer share is looking on. That's all you'll get;" and turning to the girl, inquired: "Where are you going, Josie?"

"To Mrs. Rudolph's," she replied. "Don't

you worry 'bout me, Extree. I can get along. I'm going to see you through—that is, I and Joe—ain't we, Joe?"

"Yer bet," answered his pard.

"Time's up," said the turnkey, turning to Nick. "Now then, number one hundred and three, back you go."

"Yer just a hundred and two out," checked Extree. "I'm number one, Mister, an' yer'll find me so before long. I'm innercent, an' dere's goin' ter be a muss 'bout dis."

"Muss?" sneered the man. "Why, the detectives have evidence enough to send you up for life. You can't get over that."

"Can't I?" grinned Extree, as he bade them good afternoon. "Yer bet Nick'll do der trick."

"Extree," whispered Joe. "Mr. Tom says we're to keep right on wid der stand."

"He's a good man," said our hero. "Adoo, Joe;" then, smiling, followed his jailer.

For six weeks Extree languished in the Tombs, during which time he was often visited by Budd Ketchum, who made him promise not to inform Josie or Joe that he received any visitors but themselves.

"Yer plead guilty," Budd would urge. "Der judge will let yer off easy on yer fust offense."

But Extree didn't see it in that light; meanwhile, the repeated visits of the sport were recorded against Nick.

At length the day of trial came, and Extree was placed at the bar, where he pleaded:

"Not guilty; 'cos yer see, judge, I didnt do it."

A plea that caused the judge to say:

"Not guilty, prisoner?"

"Thank yer, judge," joyfully ejaculated the newsboy, believing that his trial was somehow over, but the judge frowned, saying:

"Prisoner at the bar, I merely instructed you that your plea was irregular," hearing which, Extree muttered:

"Now you've got me, jedge," and then subsided.

Mr. Tom McNally had furnished, or, rather, feed a counsel for Nick, but the lawyer had never taken the trouble to call on the boy and learn his story, so he was of very little use.

The President of the Gas Company, who was down upon Extree, gave his evidence; and Mr. Tom, who had bought out the president, and now owned all the shares in the concern, testified to Nick's honesty; then came several detectives, who swore that they knew him to be the companion of thieves, and that for months they had suspected him, placing the boss news-stand man in the chair to testify that he had warned them about the lad, and altogether making out a very black case against poor Extree, who, in his just indignation, frequently desired to cross-question the witnesses, but was stopped by his own counsel, while the latter, in the lad's defense, pleaded the youth of his client.

"Blame it!" muttered Nick, "I'm nearly sixteen! One would think, to hear him chin, dat I was a babby."

Unfortunately, Extree had only Mr. Tom to speak for him.

The judge, a fat, overfed person, who looked like the keeper of a policy shop, complimented the detectives upon the way in which they had worked up the case, then addressing the jury, said:

"Gentlemen: Your verdict is simple enough. This boy, who, by the evidence of the police, is an old and well-known criminal, after being treated like a friend by McNally, one of the prosecutors, plans to rob his benefactor, and actually uses the news-stand bought for his benefit, by that kind friend, as a cover by which to plunder the Good Samaritan."

Hearing this, Extree's face flushed, and raising his voice, he said:

"That ther's a derved lie, jedge!"

"Silence!" bellowed the usher: and when the laugh subsided, the annoyed judge continued:

"You hear, gentlemen of the jury, what sort of a young rowdy the prisoner is. I now ask you to consider him guilty or not guilty." Whereupon the intelligent jurymen awoke to a sense of their responsibility, and returned a verdict of:

"Guilty!"

"Prisoner at the bar," bullied the judge, "what have you to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?" when Extree replied:

"Say? Why I've got *everything* ter say! Dem detectives hev reglar given me away. Dey's in der pay ob dat boss stand-owner. Yer kean't fool Nick!"

"That will do, that will do!" snapped the judge. "I sentence you to five years imprisonment."

"Five years!" gasped the poor lad, while Josie, who was in the body of the court, uttered a heart-rending cry and fainted, and Joe piped in his shrill treble:

"Shame!" He's as innercent as yer are!"

"Usher," directed the judge, "discover the individual who made that remark;" but, though the man scowled and bullied, he failed to detect the culprit.

When the disturbance had somewhat subsided, Mr. McNally rose, saying:

"Will your honor permit me to make a remark?"

"Yes, if you're brief!" snarled the judge.

Mr. Tom was very pale and evidently meant business. The verdict had not surprised him, but the sentence had.

"Your honor," he said, "I was compelled to prosecute this unfortunate boy; the law and my late partner gave me no alternative. At the same time, I no more believe that he committed the crime, than that you wish to be unjust in sentencing him to degradation." Then, seeing that his words told, briefly sketched Extree's life—his devotion to his dead father and mother, and his love for their memory, winding up with:

"Your honor, the humble grave of this poor newsboy's parents, above which this honest lad planted those touching emblems of his love, is a better witness than those blunderers, who, calling themselves detectives, have leagued to crush Extree Nick! We have good detective officers in this city, but those whisky-soaked ex-criminals," pointing to the witnesses, "are not worthy of the name they have assumed!"

The judge, startled by this noble speech, thought for a moment, then observed:

"I will remit four years of his sentence, and commit him to the Reformatory."

As Mr. McNally passed him, Extree said:

"God bless yer, boss! I'll clear myself some day an' expose dem lyin' derectives."

CHAPTER IX.

A MOST JUST VERDICT.

WHEN an innocent person is committed to prison he is not a criminal, but a martyr.

Strangely enough, after Extree was pronounced guilty, the public began to take an interest in him, and a legal gentleman, named Russell, offered his services to obtain a new trial.

"Yer mighty kind, boss," said Nick. "'Pears ter me der world's changin', or, Extree's got more friends den he knowed of. Yer see Josie Perry an' Joe Rudolph an' dey'll tell yer suthin'."

The lawyer, a young man of gentle mein and quiet address, one of the best fellows in New York, bade the lad keep up his courage as he had applied for a new trial; then smilingly withdrew, leaving the newsboy feeling mighty good.

In a few days Josie called and told him that they had a clew, and that Budd Ketchum was suspected.

"Budd!" he cried; "surely, no! Why, I loaned him money, an' helped him; yer must be wrong, Josie."

"No, I ain't," she replied. "Joe and I have found it out, and the lawyer says he'll clear you sure."

"Where is Budd?" mused Extree. "He advised me ter plead guilty!"

"Vamoosed!" she answered; then taking his hand said: "Extree, Mr. McNally told Joe that if you didn't mind, I might attend the news-stand. He says it would take, as gentlemen always prefer to deal with a girl!"

"Pertieler such a pooty un as yer are, Josie," he smilingly observed, adding in an undertone, "so yer was at der bottom ob der biz—hey, me noble Budd?"

"Extree," she said, "if that man wasn't here, do you know what I'd do?"

"Josie," he saucily replied, "ef dat man wasn't lookin', d'yer know what I'd do?" Then, winking slyly, added: "I don't know whether I'll give my consent ter yer mining der news-stand; some swell or another might want ter run off wid yer?" when she quickly remarked:

"Shoo fly, don't bodder me! The only swell I care for is a scamp named Extree Nick!"

"Well, Josie," he said, "yer kin take my place; fur, even when I quit this, I'm not goin' ter enter der old stand until I brings dem derectives an' other fellers' noses to der grindstone. Dey've hunted me down, and I'm goin' ter hunt dem."

"Time's up," said the warden, a fatherly man, who felt for Extree. "Now, my dear," addressing Josie, "you must withdraw;" then turning his back, gave them an opportunity for a sly kiss.

In the newsboy's cell were two thieves, who did their best to corrupt him, but the remembrance of his parents kept him pure, and he paid no heed to his companions.

At length the day of his second trial arrived, and when the detectives, whose names were Piper, Snell and Green, had repeated their evidence and the case for the prosecution was closed, Mr. Russell rose and called Extree's landlady, who deposed to the fact of seeing a strange man arrive at her house with a package, and of watch-

ing him stow the contents under the mattress of Nick's bed.

"How did you see this?" demanded the recorder, on which the woman whispered:

"I peeped through a crack in the door."

This reply created a roar of laughter, which was renewed when Extree said:

"Dat's jes' like her; she's a reglar peeper!" whereupon she retorted:

"I shouldn't see anything if I didn't, Nick!"

A host of testimony followed to prove that the office was broken into by professional thieves.

"Who procured these witnesses?" inquired the recorder. "Why were they not summoned at the first trial?"

"Your honor," said Mr. Russell, "the first trial was conducted by the detectives, and was a burlesque upon justice. The prisoner owes his escape from unjust imprisonment to a small boy named Joe Rudolph, his partner in the news business, who, believing in Extree's innocence, has worked day and night to obtain evidence to clear his friend."

"He is a very noble boy," observed the judge, who then proceeded to charge the jury.

When his speech was ended, the foreman turned to his companions and whispered to each:

"Well?" Whereupon all replied:

"Not guilty!"

Having ascertained all of their opinions he smiled, bowed to the recorder, and said in a loud, clear tone:

"Our verdict is NOT GUILTY," adding, "and we deeply regret that the poor boy should have been detained so long in prison!"

"Nicodemus Newcome," said the judge, "the jury has pronounced you innocent of the crime for which you once have been condemned to imprisonment! In their verdict I most cordially agree. You leave this court an honest newsboy, without a stain or blame upon your character. My opinion is you have been the victim of a foul conspiracy. I shall be pleased to assist you in any way!"

"You're right, jedge—your honor—I mean!" replied Extree, who felt as proud as a boss rooster. "I've been innercent all der time. I'm goin' ter start a paper route up town, an' if yer'll take yer daily literator from me and recommend me ter yer neighbors, I'll serve yer punctocal;" and smiling added, "an' if yer've got any boys an' gals, yer should order der Boys' WEEKLY. All live boys an' gals take de paper." Then, amid loud cheers from the spectators, bowed and quitted the dock, confronting Josie, Joe, and Mr. Tom, who warmly congratulated him on his vindication.

As they turned to depart, the recorder said:

"Where is the boy, Joe Rudolph?"

"Here," replied Mr. Russell, bringing Joe to the fore.

"Rudolph," said the judge, "I must compliment you upon the way in which you have ferreted out the evidence required to clear your friend." When Joe blushed, ducked his head, and giving a back nod at Josie, said:

"Scuse me, boss! It wan't me, it was dat yer young lady, I only did as she told me. She's got a head on her I tell yer—boss! She knowed my pard was innercent—"

The judge smiled at his frank explanation, and calling Josie nearer to him, said that she ought to be a man, as she would shame any ordinary detective, when Extree whispered:

"I'd much rader Josie remains as she is."

By permission of the recorder, a number of ladies in the court subscribed, and presented Josie with a sum of money, which they handed to Mr. Russell for her acceptance; meanwhile, Extree, the girl and Joe had retired into a private room.

Closing the door, our hero addressed his true friends, saying:

"How kin I thank yer?"

"I know," grinned little Joe, walking to the window and endeavoring to choke down his emotion, while Josie averted her head.

Moving quickly to her side, Extree softly whispered:

"Josie, dear, yer've bin a true, good chum allus. I don't know how to repay yer," when she turned her bright, tear-bedewed eyes upon him, and significantly pursed her cherry lips.

Taking the hint, Extree "tasted the honey;" then was about to repeat the dose, when one of the detectives entered, and, noticing their confusion, sneered:

"Caught you, hey, newsboy?" Hearing which, Nick made a gesture of contempt, saying:

"Caught us? Pooh! Why don't yer ketch der Nathan murderer an' der skunks as stole poor little Charley Ross? Oh, scratch yer ear, an' trot; yer'll be caught before long at suthin' worse'n kissin'."

CHAPTER X.

EXTREE NICK RESUMES BUSINESS.

THERE was great rejoicing among the newsboys when Extree was pronounced not guilty. During the first trial a few of the lads had contrived to obtain admission to the court, but upon the occasion of the boy's acquittal the place was so jam-jam full of ladies that "der fellers" had no show. However, when the word was received at the newspaper offices that Extree Nick was free, a swarm of his acquaintances rushed down to the court-house, and, seeing Mr. Russell, cried:

"Tree cheers fur Nick's lawyer!"

"As their 'rahs" died away, Mr. McNally came down the steps, whereupon the boys gave him a "chilute," as they termed it, causing Tom to smile, and say:

"Thank you, my sons; but I really don't understand why you should cheer me."

"Yer stuck ter Extree Nick!" shouted Big Jemmy.

"Yer didn't go back on der boy 'cos he sold papers!" cried another; and amid similar cries Mr. Tom hurried across the park and proceeded to his office.

By that time all the newsboys and bootblacks operating within a mile of the City Hall were in the crowd awaiting Extree's appearance, Big Jemmy acting as boss of the party.

In a little while Joe straggled out, followed by Extree, hand in hand with Josie.

This set the newsboys wild, and caused them to break out into a roar of welcome; hearing which Josie relinquished her hold of Nick's hand and was about to retire, when the boy recaptured it and, winking at the sea of upturned faces, said:

"Dey didn't fool Nick!"

"Rah—rah—rah Tiger!" yelled the crowd. "Bully for yer, Extree! Bully for yer, Josie!"

The girl had no objection to them, for she knew almost every face; so smiling, she observed, in a good, clear voice:

"And bully for little Joe Rudolph!"

"Ye-a!" they roared. "Right yer are, Josie! Bully fur Joe! Where's the little cuss got ter?"

"Here he is!" shouted a tall fellow among the newsboys, jerking Joe off his feet and lifting him upon his own shoulder.

As they were descending the steps, a bootblack rushed forward, saying:

"Lemme give yer a shine, Extree! It'll bring me luck!" So Nick paused, in order to humor the boy.

"Yer don't look a bit der worse fur bein' in der Tombs!" said Big Jemmy.

"Worse!" quickly answered Josie; "of course he doesn't; he was innocent!"

"See any murderers in dere?" demanded another acquaintance; whereupon Extree grinned and said:

"No, bub, I wasn't in fur killin' a feller creetur, so dey didn't put me in der row!"

Unluckily just then the three detectives, Piper, Snell and Green, came out of the building, and, in lieu of walking off quietly, they made use of some offensive remark about Josie.

"Yer low bummers!" said Extree. "If yer hadn't dat uniform on I'd whip eider of yer!"

"We'll have you yet!" said Snell.

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot, all free ob yer!" answered the boy. "Yer don't fool Nick!"

Who's dem cops, anyhow?" excitedly inquired Big Jemmy.

"Dem!" laughed Extree, "why, boys, take a good look at 'em; dem's der der-tectives dat give me away on der fust trial!"

"Yah—ah—ah!" hooted the crowd, moving menacingly towards the officers and making demonstrations of a tendency to assault them; seeing which Extree quitted Josie for a moment, and, elbowing himself before the boys, shouted:

"Drop it, chums! Don't hurt der poor little fellers! I wouldn't touch 'em. If yer wait a little time you'll see 'em goin' to der Island in der Black Maria!" a remark which caused the officers to turn white with passion, and to draw their locusts.

"Put up yer strikers!" shouted the boys. "We won't hurt yer! Yar—yar—yar! Go home an' tell yer mothers you've bin scared by a few newsboys!"

Seeing that if they advanced they stood a chance of being hooted all the way up town, the detectives retired to the police-station where they applied to the superintendent for protection, while Extree rejoined Josie, and was conducting her towards the news-stand, when a ragged lad rushed up to the crowd which still followed Nick, saying:

"Scoot b'ys! Der Telegram is gettin' a extree out! Full 'count ob de trial!"

"Scuse me, Josie!" said Nick, warming at the sound; then leaving her to return to the stand, darted down town followed by his gang; Joe

Rudolph being triumphantly carried to the very door of the delivery office.

Having the money that the ladies had subscribed for Josie in his pocket, Extree bought checks for two hundred papers, after which he joined the crowd about the delivery counter.

"Make way fur Extree!" they cried, and Big Jemmy, who was in the front rank, shouted:

"Chuck yer check down here, Nick." Then addressing the clerk, said: "Two hundred fur Extree! Mind, he must have der fust lot ter-day."

Presently down came a stack of the edition, wet from the presses, and Jemmy succeeded in obtaining the number that our hero required.

Pitching the damp mass over the heads of the crowd, he landed it in Nick's arms, crying:

"Der yer are, bub; yer kin go an' shout, fulle 'count ob yer own innereince!" then turned and scrambled for his own stock.

Peeling off about fifty of the papers for Joe, he tossed them to him, saying:

"Down town yer git, pard—Wall street"—after which, throwing the heavy heap over his left shoulder, he rushed up Broadway, never pausing until he reached his stand, where sat Josie.

Throwing down the load before her, he cried: "Hold 'em!"

Then entering the office, tossed a paper to Mr. Tom, saying:

"Here's der result ob der business, boss."

After which he withdrew, and standing outside the stall, for he had vowed never to enter it until the thieves were brought to justice, began to help Josie.

While they were thus busily employed, Mr. Tom seized a marking-brush and a large card, upon which he wrote:

EXTRA!!!

FULL ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND TRIAL OF
EXTREE NICK,

THE NEW YORK NEWSBOY!

EXTREE

NOT GUILTY.

LEAVES THE COURT WITHOUT A STAIN ON HIS
NAME.

A FOUL CONSPIRACY!

NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE NEWSGIRL JOSIE,
AND OF THE NEWSBOY JOE!

JOY OF

THE NEW YORK NEWSBOYS.

He finished this just as the boy and girl had folded their last paper, and, as he excitedly nailed the notice on the front of the stand, Josie, who was loading Nick with the extras, flushed with pride and modesty, while our hero, after hurriedly glancing at it, rushed up Broadway, crying:

"Yar—here yar extree! Fulle 'count of der 'quittal ob Extree Nick, der newsboy! Dertectives' evidence higher den a kite! Yar—here yar extree, five cents."

CHAPTER XI.

EXTREE, JOSIE AN' JOE.

FOLKS were so much interested about Extree's trial, that they didn't mind five and even ten cents for a paper, so the boy was soon relieved of his load.

As he reached the last copy he beheld the recorder, who was riding home in his carriage.

Darting into the middle of the road, the newsboy ran by the side of the vehicle, shouting:

"Yar, here yar extree! Fulle 'count of der just verdict by Judge Rackett!" when checking his coachman, and stopping the carriage, the recorder said:

"Give me a copy, Extree."

"Dat's der last one, yer honor!" said Nick, handing him the paper. "Glory to God, I kin sell it yer!"

The judge smiled, and, opening his wallet, handed the lad a dollar, saying:

"You may keep the change! It is not every day that I can purchase a paper from a boy who, but an hour or two before, was an innocent prisoner at the bar."

"Thank yer honor!" warmly replied the newsboy; "yer honor won't think it mean 'cos I didn't offer ter give yer der extree, will yer? I was 'fraid yer'd think I wanted to insult yer fur doin' yer duty!" adding, with a twinkling eye, "besides, yer honor, nobody's safe now-a-days, an' some bummer might see yer take der paper free, gratis, though gracious knows, I'd give yer a hull sheet if yer'd let me, but it's best ter be on der right side ob der street now-a-days."

The recorder laughed heartily at this smart speech, then handed him his card, saying:

"Extree, you may deliver the New York Herald, Times, Tribune, World, and Sun to me daily, and two evening papers."

"Dat's a bully order!" cried the delighted newsboy. "Don't yer honor want some weeklies?"

"You can supply me with the two best illustrated journals," laughingly replied the judge, "and I'll recommend your boys' papers, for, if they're like you, they must be live affairs and free from harm."

"Yer bet they are!" murmured Extree, and in another minute the carriage was rattling up Broadway.

Making a mental note of his order, he started down-town, and, on arriving at the news-stand, handed Josie the money he had received, saying:

"Josie, I know yer feels above taking anything from me free, so yer kin put this money inter de concern, as yer hafe of der investiment. Der ladies gave yer fifty dollars, an' der hundred odd extrees I've sold have fetched seven dollars ten—add what yer an' Joe have sole ter dat an' jerk it inter der till, an' after dis we'll all have alike."

"Extree," she blushing began, "I only came here for a little time," when he stopped her, saying:

"Cheese it, Josie. Yer jes' made fur dis biz. If yer say no, I'll never smile again. We'll have a new sign painted ter read, 'Extree, Josie an' Joe.'"

Her eyes sparkled merrily as she replied:

"I pass. I can't do anything with you, Extree."

"Good enough," he said, then entered the gas company's office, and asked to see Mr. McNally.

"Come on," cried Mr. Tom, who was preparing to leave for the day. "Seat yourself, Extree."

Nick perched on the edge of a chair and began:

"Boss, yer've been awful kind ter Extree."

"Will you please talk about something else?" said Mr. Tom, endeavoring to speak sternly.

"I'm going to dine with Mr. Russell, and do not wish to have my temper ruffled. Have you done as you said you would and taken Josie into partnership?"

"Yes, boss," he grinned, "I've done more; I've told her ter give Joe an equal share ob der biz, an' she put in her money. Der firm's ter be called, Extree, Josie an' Joe, an' we're all equal, free an' alike. I tell you, boss, you've been dreadful good ter Extree."

"Nicodemus Newcome," said Mr. Tom, with mock gravity, "do you wish to make me mad?"

"No, boss," he answered. "I won't say another word about yer kindness; but I must tell you one thing."

Then pausing, as though thinking, murmured:

"Yer've bin dreadful good ter me, so yer hev, an' I'd die fur yer!" after which remembering himself, he blushed and gazing at Mr. Tom, smilingly observed:

"Dere, boss, now I'm done, so far as sayin' any more ter yer 'bout yer goodnsss; but yer hev bin awful good, yer know."

"Extree," said his friend, "what is this I hear about your vow never to enter the news-stand?"

"It means this, boss," he said, fumbling his cap with his hands. "When I was a convicted prisoner I swore by der mem'ry ob my poor father an' mother, dat if I got free widout dem burglars an' dertective getting deir dose, I'd never enter dat news-stand until I brought deir noses to der grindstone; an' I must keep my word, boss. I kin run der masheen, but, until I see dem cusses where I was, kean't enter dat stand. Extree never goes back on his word!"

"You're right," said Mr. Tom, combing his hair. "Stick to that, Nick; remember 'Vengeance is mine,' said the Lord."

"I know," smilingly replied the newsboy. "I ain't going ter seek revenge, but ter be der means of bringing dem jockies ter justice! Dey shan't fool Nick for nothing!"

Mr. Tom laughed, then remarked:

"You can do as you please, Nick, but, take my advice, don't be like the dog in the fable, lose the substance for the shadow. Stick to your extra and regular newspaper biz, and some day, you will laugh at what the detectives have done."

"Thanks to yer, boss; I kin laugh at 'em now," he replied. "Yer've bin a real good friend ter me—I—I—I mean I,"—then grinning, added: "Taint no kind er use, Mr. Tom; I'm chock full ob thanks right up to der root ob my tongue, an' it's got ter come, or I shall bust! Dern it, it's hard to tell a feller he shan't say he's grateful arter he's had so much kindness from yer. I say this now, an' I shall allus say it, yer a bully man, an' I hope some day ter show yer dat a newsboy kin do suthen' more'n say—thank yer."

"Extree," quietly remarked Mr. Tom, who found that if he did not change the topic of conversation Nick would keep on thanking him. "do you love Josie?"

"Why d'yer arxe me, boss?" quickly returned the lad.

"I have a reason," was his friend's rejoinder.

The newsboy softly closed the door leading out into the office, then whispered:

"Boss, Josie is an angel! Yer don't know how good she is. Yer remember when she sold der extrees fur me, dat night me father died?"

Tom motioned assent, whereupon the boy continued:

"I felt kinder drawered ter Josie dat night; fur," here Extree's eyes filled with tears, "fur, fore I knowed yer, she seemed der only real friend I had, not but what der boys wasn't kind. Do I love her? Well, I don't know zackaly what yer means by dat, boss. I love pie an doughnuts, but I'm dead gone on Josie. I could eat her, boss, she's so good. I'm real downright mashed on her, fur ter me she's all dere's left of my father an' mother."

Then noticing that Mr. Tom looked puzzled, added:

"I jes' feels dat dey sometimes talks ter me through her. Love her? Yea, love's a bully word. Yer bet I love her, boss."

"Ever tell her so?" said his friend.

"Tell 'er, boss?" he laughed. "Well, dat's a good joke. 'Why, no; but,' here he winked, 'bless yer, she knows it, though we never talks about it. We ain't old enough, boss,' and he quitted the office."

"Good! very good!" said the gentleman, as though thinking aloud, "and yet they say that poor children are always vicious."

CHAPTER XII.

JOE GOES ADRIFT.

EXTREE told Josie what he had said to Mr. Tom, but did not inform her of their conversation with regard to his being in love.

As they were chatting, Mrs. Rudolph came np, saying:

"Glad to see you've got justice, Nick. Where's my Joe?"

"He ought ter be here," answered the boy. "He went down ter Wall street wid a lot of extrees, but must have sold out long ago. Guess he's gone straight home; he's ben on his feet all day."

"Won't you come and take supper with us?" urged the good woman. "I've been expecting you every minute since I heard the news."

"I'll run down town and see if I kin find Joe," said Nick. "Perhaps he's got excited over sellin', an' gone in fur three or four editions. I'll bring him home if he's dere."

Assisting Josie to close the stand, the boy loosened the sign, and, wrapping it in an old newspaper, proceeded down town to a by-street off Broadway where lived a sign-painter named McCuff.

Climbing several dingy flights of stairs, he presently arrived at a battered door, leading to a shanty built on the roof of the house; then, entering the apartment, saluted a lad, who was at work on a tin sign, with:

"Hello, McCuff; how yar, son?"

"I'm so so," replied the painter; "that is, I'm derned tired; bin ter Greenwood. Glad ter hear yer got clear off. So der boys give yer a reception dis afternoon, hey?"

"How der yer know, if ye've bin over in Brooklyn?" demanded Extree, proud to think that the good news had traveled so rapidly.

"Becos' I saw yer pard, Joe, over dere," answered the painter, "and he told me yer was free again."

"Joe?" interrogated Nick. "Joe over in Brooklyn?"

"Yea," returned McCuff, who had once been a newsboy. "I guess I know every b'y in der ole perfesh. Course it was Joe, an' he was follerin' a feller and a gal."

"Joe was? Shoo! Yer don't fool Nick wid dat yarn."

"Yer needn't believe it," snapped the painter.

"But it's so derned strange!" said Extree.

"Why should Joe be over in Brooklyn follerin' a feller and a gal?"

"P'raps he is mashed on the lady," grinned McCuff, seizing a dust brush and dusting the superfluous Dutch metal off the sign. "She was rather a pooty gal, and kinder seemed afraid of der feller."

Extree scratched his head, and, seating himself, muttered:

"I'm euzhred."

After a pause, the painter said:

"What yer want done wid yer sign, Nick?"

"Lemme think," said our hero, gazing up at the sky-light; "this is thunderin strange. D'yer know the name of the fellow wid der gal?"

The painter shook his head, saying:

"Never saw der sport afore."

"Sport!" cried Extree, "sport. Had he a small mustache and a kinder pooty face?"

"He had no hair on his mug," answered the other. "I looked mostly at the gal, who, as I said afore, seemed scared like."

In vain Nick tried to gain a more exact description. All that McCuff knew was that Joe was shadowing a feller and a girl, and that, as he passed him, the boy had whispered: "Extree has got clear off."

"See here, Mac," said Nick, producing his sign, "I want yer to repaint this in prime style."

"What d'yer want on it?" inquired the artist, picking up a small order book, and seizing a pencil.

"I want yer to put," said our hero, "Extree, Josie an' Joe, Newsvenders. All respectable papers kin be bought here. Buy der Boys' WEEKLY, it's the best paper cut."

"Anything else?" demanded the painter, biting the lead of his pencil.

"That's enough ain't it?" said Nick, who was still thinking about Joe. "Yer see the old biz is made inter a company; treasurer, Miss Josie Perry."

"Yer mashed dere, aint yer?" smilingly inquired McCuff.

"Git out," retorted our hero "what made yer think ov such foolishness? Gold letters on a black sign, an' mind yer spell it kerriect!" with which he winked at the painter, and, as he withdrew inquired:

"What street did yer say yer saw Joe in?"

"On der main road right ober by Gowanus Creek," answered Mac. "Seemed's though they were going out ter Greenwood."

"How long will yer be fixin' dat shingle?" said Extree, as he laid his hand upon the hasp of the latch.

"Give it ter yer ter-morrer," returned the artist.

"Take it round to der stan' an' ax der treasurer ter pay yer," replied Extree.

Then down-stairs he went, and on reaching the street, started for South Ferry.

The boat was crowded, and it was with difficulty that he worked his way to the bow.

It was the first night of freedom, and, as the craft plowed its way across the water, Extree drank in the balmy May air, and, but for his anxiety with regard to Joe, would have thoroughly enjoyed the scene.

When the boat arrived at the Brooklyn shore, he jumped, and, landing upon the floating stage, darted up the incline.

Then springing upon a car marked "Greenwood," seated himself just inside the door; the vehicle filling and starting right away.

On arriving near Gowanus Creek, he alighted, and began to inquire about Joe; asking boys and people working on the roadside.

At length he met a lad named Boss-eyed Sam, whom he had seen in New York.

"Hello, Boss!" he cried.

"Gosh," grinned the boy. "All New York coming ober ter Brooklyn dis evening."

"How?" he demanded.

"I saw Joe Rudolph follerin' yer frien' Budd Ketchum dis afternoon?" said Boss-eye. "Joe was on the blink or on der rever, for he wouldn't answer my whistle!"

"Wot could he be arter?" said Extree, burning to learn more, but not daring to betray his anxiety.

"Well," grinned the other, "Budd was wid a gal, an' my opinion is was goin' to rob her, an' Joe was a pipin at his game."

"Does Budd do dem things?" inquired Nick. "I tort he was on der square!"

"Square!" sneered the boy; "he's a dead beat: he makes up ter a gal, den get's her out ter some den an' robs her! He's a regular fraud."

"Dern him!" muttered Extree. "Where d'ye think they've gone?"

"Out by der Shemetry," answered Boss-Eye. "And goes ter a house kept by his mother." Then giving Nick a description of the shanty, added, "Mind yer eye, dey've got a big dorg!"

Our hero started off at a brisk pace, as the night was closing in, and after walking for half an hour, began to mount a hill upon which were built a number of shanties.

As he neared the designated spot, he heard a moan coming from the vicinity of a big boulder to the left, so being a tender-hearted lad, he turned in the direction of the sound.

By that time it was quite dusk.

The stone was large, and crouched upon the top was a savage dog, which growled as Extree approached, whereupon the boy picked up a bit of rock, and taking good aim, struck the animal a fearful crack on the right temple, knocking it off into a deep hole behind, at the same time saying:

"Dere. Yer kin jes' scratch yer ear an' trot,"

when a boy rose from the ground, then tottering towards him, fell into his arms and fainted. It was Joe.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GETTING ONE ON THE NOB.

As the dog was growling and endeavoring to scramble out of the hole. Extree concluded to git, so, placing Joe over his shoulder, he retraced his steps.

Having only six cents in his pocket he dared not take a car, therefore was compelled to walk every step of the way to the ferry, where he rested for awhile in the waiting-room and examined Joe's injuries.

Poor little chap! He had a cut on the mouth and a terrible bruise upon his head.

"I'll give Mr. Darned Budd rubarb when we meets," muttered Extree.

"Is that boy drunk?" inquired one of the ferry officials.

"Drunk! no," indignantly replied our hero. "Not half so drunk as yer, or yer'd see he'd bin almost murdered!"

Just then the boat arrived from New York.

"Get out of this waiting-room!" snarled the man.

"Oh! scratch yer ear an' trot!" cried the boy. "Dis yer room is fur passengers. Yer kean't fool Nick!"

The man, hearing some of the crowd in waiting laugh, laid hold of the unconscious Joe, whereupon Extree grabbed the fellow by the collar and hoisted him out of the place, saying:

"Yer drop it, unless yer wants a extree head put on yer!" Upon which the man called to a policeman, saying:

"Take that young rowdy in charge; he's assaulted me!"

"Here, what's the diff'ly?" demanded the cop.

Extree showed him Joe's wounds and explained the matter to the officer's satisfaction; then, amid the cheers of the passengers, went on board the ferryboat, while the man, who had charged him with assault, shouted:

"Ill flx yer if ever I catch yer again!" But Nick did not deign to reply.

It was past eight o'clock ere he arrived at Mrs. Rudolph's, he having had to carry Joe from the South Ferry.

Mrs. Rudolph was wild with terror, and for some time imagined that her boy was dead, while Extree rushed off for a doctor.

About ten that night, the sufferer recovered his senses, and, upon seeing Extree, said:

"I—I've hed a derned lick on der nut, Nick."

"Bet yer hev," answered his partner. "Wot did yer go over ter Brooklyn fur, hey?"

"I'm blamed if I kin remember!" murmured the boy. "My nut is all shook up—so—! Lemme think?"

"Extree," said Mrs. Rudolph, "if you like to lodge here I have a room I can let you—dollar a week. I wouldn't charge you, but I'm not rich."

"Not another word, ma'm," he replied, "I'll get my traps an' yer kin say der trick's done!"

"Your trunk is here," answered his new landlady, "I've paid your rent and took it from your old place."

Mrs. Rudolph insisted upon his going right off to bed, as he was footsore and tired, so after nodding to Josie and taking another look at Joe, he retired.

The next morning the little boy was delirious, and, in his ravings, continually cried:

"I've got yer—Budd! help! Oh, der dorg—der dorg!"

True to his word, Extree rose at five o'clock and by six proceeded up-town with his papers, selling a stack on the way, then returned and took down the shutters for Josie, who in her neat muslin dress looked as pretty as a picture.

"How's Joe?" he said, as he ate the breakfast she had brought him.

"Won't you come inside the stand and sit down?" inquired the girl.

"Not till I fixes Budd an' dem detectives," he replied. "Much as I should like ter sit wid yer, Josie, I couldn't go back on my word."

All that day he was around, fetching her supplies or selling papers, and many were the inquiries with regard to Joe, who was very popular with the newsboys.

When Mr. Tom heard of the lad's state, he called to see him, and told Mrs. Rudolph that he would pay his doctor's bill.

For three days it appeared doubtful whether little Joe would pull through, but on the fourth, Saturday, he rallied.

Extree and Josie had every now and then slipped away in order to help nurse their friend, and, when the doctor said that he would "not die this time," their joy knew no bounds.

It was about three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and Broadway was thronged with vehicles, when a light buggy, driven by the boss news-stand owner, went past the gas company's office.

Beside the driver sat a young man with his coat-collar turned up and his hat pulled down, in order to hide his features.

It was Budd Ketchum.

Extree, who had just come from Joe, knew him in an instant, and pointing him out to Josie, cried:

"Dere's der jockey!" then dashed in pursuit, ducking and dodging among the horses, and narrowly escaping being run over.

The driver of the buggy saw him, and lashing up his horse, worked in and out between the vehicles, then quickly turning to the left, down Canal street, eased a little in order to see if Nick was following.

As he glanced round, Extree sprang on to the back part of the buggy, and was about to drag Budd overboard, when the latter leaped out, while the driver, grasping Nick by the collar began to punch his head in a most vicious manner; between the blows guiding his horse and crying:

"You young thief, I've got you, hey?" when a red-bearded, good-looking gentleman, who had seen the whole circus, came out of a wholesale store, and, grasping the horse's head, said, in a quiet, yet commanding, tone:

"Say, my friend, you stop punching that boy."

"How?" snarled the fellow. "Who are you, anyhow?"

"My name is Righter," smilingly replied Nick's champion. "You've no right to hit that boy; and if you had, you ought not to do it; hear?"

"By —" began the brute, who held Extree so that if the boy dropped he would fall backwards and split his skull; but the word had scarcely passed his lips ere the gentleman quitted the horse's head, and, springing up into the vehicle grasped the driver by the throat, released Extree, and helped him down, then followed himself, leaving the boss news-stand man gurgling like a half-choked cat.

Before the ruffian could recover himself, the horse started at a rapid pace, and in two minutes the vehicle was out of sight.

"Say, sonny," laughingly inquired his new friend, who had not turned a hair over the scrimmage, "what was that fellow licking you for?"

Extree told him, adding:

"I'm real obliged ter yer, boss; yer bounced him splendid!" then drawing a copy of *THE BOYS' WEEKLY* from his pocket, said: "Boss, if yer've got a boy, take dis; dere's bully stories in it, an' nothin' ter do him harm."

"Thank you," said the gentleman, slipping a stamp into his hand. "What's your name, sonny?"

"My name?" he cried. "I'm Extree Nick, der newsboy, de chap der detectives tried ter give away! Dat jockey dat punched me was one ob der crowd! I see it all! Good aft'noon, boss."

When he reached the stand, Josie anxiously inquired:

"Did you fix him, Extree?" whereupon he smilingly replied:

"No, der cuss fixed me agin dis time; but I'll sick him yet."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LOVE-SICK MARBLE-CLIPPER.

THE following day being Sunday, Extree, after serving his morning papers, turned his steps towards the cemetery.

Being strong and desirous of saving his money, he walked to the ferry, and from thence to his destination on the other side of the river, and as it was yet early, arrived near the gates before any of the funeral processions.

Pausing at the office of a man who announced himself as "an Italian Sculptor," but who in reality was an ordinary marble-clipper, Nick said to the old boy:

"Fine mornin'!"

The artist in stone knocked the ashes out of his pipe, then said:

"Begorra, but she's a foine slip av a gurl!"

"Who?" asked Extree.

"The colleen who has jist gone into the cemetery," answered the fellow, winking and blinking like an ancient owl.

"Mashed?" grinned our hero. "In love?"

"Dead!" returned the other. "I've put her tombstone aff fur three weeks jist to hev her come out here Sundays; but last week she ses to me, ses she: 'Mr. Tim Chipper,' she ses—she always calls me dat—if ye don't put them stones up before the next time I come, I shall countermin' the order,' she ses."

"How could one order her own gravestones?" demanded the astonished boy.

"Shure, an' I tould her," he continued, "that me name was Mulligan, an' dat if she would go up to section K she'd see me last wife's monuymint; cost me a t'ousand dollars, be jabers! but she only sassed me, sayin', 'Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot!' Be me soul, but she's as purty as she's merry!"

"Josie!" muttered Extree, nodding to the love-sick marble-masher and walking forward.

He soon arrived at the well-known spot, where he found the girl removing the winter coverings from the rose bushes.

The grave was neatly sodded, while on the head-stone he read the names of his parents.

"Ah, Extree," she blushing exclaimed, as she glanced up at him. "I was in hopes that I should have got away before you arrived."

"Dis yer work, Josie?" he asked.

"Partly," she said; "Mr. Tom paid for the stone and cutting, and I turfed the mound."

"Yer a bully gal!" he said.

He felt so proud of his friends, so grateful for their goodness, that for some time he could not reply; seeing which Josie walked slowly toward the lower entrance to the grounds.

"It's just splendid," he at length murmured.

"Mr. Tom, however kin I thank yer."

After spending some time near the spot, he rejoined the girl, saying:

"Let's go out through the upper gate, Josie. It's nearer home."

"I—I," she began. "I'd rather not!"

The sun was gaining power every instant, and neither of them had breakfasted, added to which she blushed so that Nick felt uncomfortable.

Presently he asked:

"Why not?"

"Well, you see," she began, half crying and half laughing, as a woman does when she has innocent reasons for keeping a secret. "I'd rather not say, Extree!"

"Derned funny!" he thought; then glancing toward the upper gate beheld the old party squinting obliquely at them.

"Rayther not say?" murmured Nick. "Surely, yer don't want to keep anything from me, hey?"

"Don't ask me any more about it," she pleaded.

Extree bit his lips.

Could it be possible that the hoary headed old scamp had referred to his sweetheart?

"Say," he whispered, "has any one been makin' up ter yer, Josie?"

"Mr. Tom," she began, meaning that Mr. McNally had given her the funds for the grave-stones, and that she had ordered them, when Extree flared up with:

"Mr. Tom, hey? Itort he axed arter yer rather peculiar!"

"Hush—hush!" she cried, pausing, and placing her little hand upon his mouth. "Dont say anything you'll be sorry for by and by. Mr. Tom is your best friend!"

"Not if he's mashed on yer, Josie!" he quickly answered, when the marble-cutter once more poked his head round the gate and winked lovingly at the girl.

Nick did not see this, but she did, so she turned about, saying:

"You know the marble works near the gate?"

"Yea!" he nodded.

"Kept by the old man?" she continued, blushing and smiling by turns.

"Yea!" he said, the truth beginning to dawn upon him.

"Well, Extree," she murmured, "you'll promise me not to git mad and hurt him?"

"Hurt who?" laughed Nick.

"Well, you see," she nervously replied, "he's an old man, and I've been out here bothering and begging him to cut the stone before you came to visit the place, but he didn't understand me, and actually wanted to marry me!"

"He'd better cut a gravestone for himself," grinned Nick. "Come, Josie, let's go by him, an' show him yer've got a young man."

"Oh, no," she whispered, "let's go by the lower gate."

But Extree was firm, so they turned and faced the music.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old rooster, thrusting his pipe into his coat-pocket. "Ah, me darlint, there ye are!"

"Come," blushed the girl, "let's hurry by him."

"Not much, Josie," Nick said. "Der old masher has got ter apologize ter yer," with which he marched up to the marble-clipper, saying:

"Yer a nice, hoary-headed old scamp, ain't yer? I've a good mind ter report yer ter der authorities."

"What are ye talkin' about?" said the cunning old rat. "Sure, an' is it dhrunk yez are, ye monkey?"

"Oh, yer kean't fool Nick!" retorted the boy. "Ef dere's any monkey in der matter, it's yer-

self. Yer a nice old feller, ain't yer, ter want ter marry my young woman."

The old sinner's eyes twinkled, and he beckoned Nick aside, saying:

"Aisy—aisy! Is she your gal?"

"Yea," nodded the newsboy.

"Sell her to me?" nervously observed the other.

"How!" cried Extree; "yer awful old rascal! Yer ought ter be pole-axed!"

"Aisy—aisy!" murmured the aged scamp, keeping his greedy eyes upon Josie, who was sauntering down the road. "I mane biz. There's lots av gals in the world for yez, but I only love yonder colleen! I'll make it worth yez while to give her up!"

"Extree grew scarlet and white with anger, then said:

"Yer dried up, skrunky, pin-headed, bent up, wilted old skunk, d'yer know what yer kin do?"

"N-o-o!" tremblingly answered the marble-smasher, fearing that Nick was about to strike him. "Kape yez hands off me, yez murderin' young blayguard."

"Oh, yer needn't be afraid, yer withered old peanut!" he sneered. "I wouldn't touch you wid a forty-fut fishin pole!" Then, calling to his companion, said:

"Come here, Josie!"

The girl slowly returned, when Extree addressed the man, saying:

"Now, old spooney, if yer don't 'pologize ter dis young lady, I'll see der cemetery authorities, who'd soon stop yer annoyin' respectable folks, an' insultin' dem wed yer love!"

The old sinner went down upon his knees among the marble dust, and swore that he was only joking; begging Josie's pardon in a most abject and pitiful manner, while Extree geyed him most unmercifully, concluding with:

"D'yer know what yer kin do now?"

"N-o-o!" tremblingly replied the old man, rising, and preparing to retreat.

Extree gave a chuckle, then, taking Josie's hand, said to her would-be purchaser:

"Yer can scratch yer ear an' trot!"

CHAPTER XV.

EXTREE MAKES A DISCOVERY.

UPON leaving the marble smasher's place, Josie and our hero stepped briskly out, yet it was fully eleven o'clock ere they arrived at Mrs. Rudolph's.

Joe, very pale and weak, welcomed them with a smile, and Mrs. Rudolph laughed heartily over their adventure with the marble man.

"He's a nice old sinner!" she cried. "I knew the late Mrs. Mulligan; it's her friends who put that monument over her!"

"Did she belong to der Mulligan Guards?" piped Little Joe, from his room.

"You'll do!" grinned Extree, while Josie went in to the sick boy and patted his cheek, saying:

"Oh, you're coming on splendidly—you can joke!"

They took a bite of something just to stay their hunger until dinner, after which Nick seated himself by one side of his partner, and Josie took her place on the other.

"I'm a thorn between two roses," smilingly observed the invalid. "So yer wouldn't sell Josie, hey, Extree?"

"Shoo-fly?" grinned Nick. "Never mind 'bout dat! If Josie is ever sold I hope it will be for a better feller den dat dried-up, old marble man! Drop it, Joe, an' tell us how yer got dat clip on der nut!"

"Well, yer see," said the boy, "I'd sold all my extrees, when, as I turned inter Broadway, I saw me noble Mr. Budd Ketchum wid a gal, so tinks I, I'll jes' spot yer."

"An' get spotted yerself," smilingly observed Extree.

"Yes, as yer did yesterday by der boss news-stand man," grinned the invalid.

"Had you there," laughed Josie, winking at Extree. "You see Joe's getting real smart."

"Go on," said our hero to his pard. "Well, what did yer do?"

"I follered him," continued Joe, "until I saw him enter a shanty an' heard the gal scream, when I knocks at ter door, shoutin': 'Yer jes let dat gal alone.'"

"Bravo!" cried Josie, kissing him. "Good for you, Joe."

"Oh, Joe's small," said Mrs. Rudolph, peeping proudly in at the door of the apartment. "Joe's awful small, for his age, but he's real spunky."

"Go on," said Extree; "yer jes gettin' to der interestin' part."

"Well," dryly returned the boy, "it may be the interestin' fur yer, but it was a awful rum un fur Joe. Out comes Budd. 'Hello,' he ses, 'what

yer want?" "What yer doin' with that gal?" I ses, when he began to lam me over der head an' ter set a dog on me. I was 'fraid ter move, an' he gave me some awful lieks with a stick. Just as I got der last one, dat I remember, der gal rushed out ob der shanty an' got off, fur sum men, who was goin' home from deir work, said dey'd kill Budd if he touched her, so he scooted; den a old woman, she came outer der shanty an' dragged me by der limbs until she reached der stone when she dropped me, an' told der dog ter watch. I laid dere until I heerd Extree say ter der dog, "Dere, yer kin scratch yer ear an' trot," when I kinder roused an' got on my feet. Then, pausing, he demanded, "so yer carried me all der way home on yer back, Nick?"

"Spouse I did," grinned our hero. "Think I was goin' ter leave yer 'cos I couldn't afford ter pay fur a kerridge!"

"Yer a good chum," murmured Joe. "I'd do anything ter show yer I like yer."

"You've done enough already, Joe," said Extree. "Now you leave the detective biz to me."

After dinner Dick and Josie talked over the matter of Budd Ketchum.

"Extree," she said, "Budd don't know me by sight. I'll fix him. Find out his lay and I'll meet him and," here her eyes flashed, "let him try to rob or hurt me."

"Josie," he replied, "I admire yer pluck, but it ain't ter be did. I know a better way. Besides, I've been thinking if I fix Budd in jail I shall scare the others."

"Well," she cried, "out with it; you've got to fix him or I shall!"

"Lemme dress up as a gal," he said, "and decoy him inter some quiet spot an' give him a derved good licking! Yer see, Josie, der perlice won't touch him; he takes care ob dem! Nick'll do der trick when I goes for him agin. I'll have him ter rights!"

The following day, while Extree was folding papers outside the stand, Budd Ketchum swaggered up, and sneering at him, said:

"Look ahea, d'yer want me?" at the same time placing his hand behind him as though reaching for his shooting-iron.

"I'd like ter hev yer where I could whip yer!" quickly replied the boy. "Yer a thief, an' tried ter bust me here, but yer didn't do it! Go an' rob some more poor gals! Yer an' yer mother are a pair!" Just then a policeman passed and Budd, nodding to the officer, said to Nick:

"Why don't yer give me in charge—dere's a cop?"

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot!" said Extree, who knew that he could not prove anything against the fellow, as unless they found the girl no one would believe Joe's story. "Yer ain't worth givin' in charge!"

Budd was playing a bluff game. He wanted to be able to move about Broadway without molestation from Extree, so he bounced him, or thought that he did, while our hero watched him like a car-spotter does a dishonest conductor. Whenever he had a little leisure he followed up his clew and soon discovered that Budd was connected with a gang of "smashers," who were passing counterfeit five-cent nickles.

The fellows were apparently well off, and lived in good style in a fine house on a cross street, to the left of Seventh Avenue.

One morning, seeing a man waiting on the stoop, as though requiring a paper, Nick rushed up to him, crying:

"Here you are—*Herald, Tribune, Times, World!*" when the man said:

"*Herald.* You're earlier than our newsman—have you a paper route near here?"

"Yea!" he answered. "I can supply yer, boss!"

"We want a woman to come and clean here evenings," said the man. "Do you know of any one? We are all single fellows in this house, and don't keep a servant! We want some one to come from five or six to eleven every evening, when we are all out, as during the day we have a good many visitors and don't want any one round. We'll give four dollars a week!"

"My sister will come," said the boy. "She's at work all day, and can't get here before seven, but she's real smart and will fix yer ter rights."

"All right," said the man. "She can come this evening and I'll let her in!" with which he paid him for the paper and ordered him to deliver eleven every day from that date—pencilling the names and numbers of each on a plain card.

Joe was now quite well again, so Extree was enabled to give more time to watching the detectives.

The reason why the counterfeiter did not want a woman round during the day was on account of Budd and his confederates being alone.

Opposite the Smasher's house was a florist whom Nick supplied with papers, and at whose

place worked a lad who had once been a news-boy, and who was a great admirer of Extree.

Telling his friend that he wanted to wait up town until noon, he obtained permission to help him, and as he had dropped in during a busy part of the day, the proprietor smiled and told him to assist in sorting the flowers.

About twelve o'clock he saw Piper and Snell, the detectives, enter the house on the other side of the street, and presently beheld them emerge, carrying something heavy in their pockets.

He was sorting pinks, and the sight of the men made him flush so that his chum inquired:

"What's der matter, Extree?"

"I don't feel very well!" he answered. "Dese pinks is overpowerin'!" then, excusing himself, quitted the place, and cautiously followed the detectives; pulling his cap-peak over his right eye and whistling:

"Tommv, make room for your uncle!"

CHAPTER XVI.

NICK ASSUMES A COMICAL DISGUISE.

PIPER and Snell walked quickly on, Extree sauntering when they were in sight, and running when they turned the corners, following them until he saw them enter a tenement-house on the upper part of Third Avenue.

As they ascended the stairs, Nick walked up to the building, and, leaning against the door-post, said to a girl who was playing in the lower hall:

"Hello, sis!"

"Hello!" she said. "Who are yer when yer mouth's full?"

"I've come to live near here," he answered, jingling some pennies in his pocket. "D'yer like candy, sis?"

"My name's Sadie Piper, an' my father is a detective," she said, tossing her head. "He's jes' gone up-stairs with Mr. Snell!"

"You're proud," he laughed.

"I'm engaged ter be married ter Billy Hautfs, der German baker," she snapped. "I kin git all the candy I want without yer help. See, I've got ten new five-cent nickles," exhibiting a handful of new coins.

"Give us change fur a twenty-five cent stamp?" said Extree. "I like new nickles."

"Is it bogus?" she eagerly demanded.

"No," he answered, handing her a well-worn stamp. "It's good 'nuf."

The girl, though young in years, was old in crime, and, like many of her sex, was unable to keep her own counsel; so, when she gave Nick the change, she said:

"I borred them from a bag out of father's bureau."

"Yer'd best put 'em back, sis," he observed. "I wouldn't rob my father if he was der biggest thief in creation!"

"Perhaps yer old man don't lick yer as mine does," quickly replied the girl.

"I wish he had der chance ter," sighed the boy.

"You're a fool to wish such a thing," she said. "My father leathers us like a lot of dogs."

"Mine's dead," said Nick.

"Wish mine was," flashed the girl. "When he was in der old biz he never hit us; now he gets drunk, an' treats us shameful."

"What biz was he in?" quietly asked Extree.

"Makin' money," she answered. "He an' Uncle Jonas, who owns a lot of news stands on Broadway. Say, did yer ever shove der queer?"

"What's dat?" he demanded, turning to depart.

"Pass counterfeit money!" she said. "Oh, I see yer a green fool. Want any more nickles?"

"No, thank yer," he grinned. "Dey might be queer," then, nodding carelessly, quitted her and proceeded down town.

"Josie!" he cried, "I've got on der track."

"Come in and tell me," she eagerly returned, opening the door of the news-stand, but he drew back, just as he was about to cross the threshold, muttering:

"No—yer—don't, Josie! Not for Nick."

"I forgot, Extree," she blushed; whereupon he whispered to her:

"So long as yer don't forget me, I don't care;" then rapidly sketched his morning's adventures, at the same time showing her the nickles, which he marked "No. 1."

"All right," she exclaimed. "I'll go to-night and you can watch outside. Those nickles look all right."

"Not much, yer don't go," he answered. "What, Josie, d'yer think I'd trust yer in dat den of thieves? Yer a brave gal, but yer don't know Nick. Lend me a suit of yer old clothes an' some false hair an' I'll do der work. I know dis money looks O K; but it's bad as old eggs!"

That evening Mrs. Rudolph and Josie fixed his hair, and dressed him as a "poor, but honest female chore-doer," after which he started up

town, taking the Seventh Avenue car at the door of his lodging and modestly shrinking into a corner, where he looked like a rather badly-fixed servant-girl.

Upon arriving up town, he, in a feigned woman's voice, begged the conductor to stop the car, then alighting, moved rapidly to his destination, and timidly rang the basement bell, which was immediately answered by the man he had seen that morning.

"Oh, you're the gal who will do the chores, are you?" said the coiner. "Well, you're something like your brother! Come along;" and leading the way up-stairs, showed him several rooms which required fixing, saying: "Now here's a key to the basement door; do your chores and let yourself out, and come here every evening about this time; Sunday I'll pay you," after which the man walked down-stairs and quitted the house.

As the sound of his footsteps died away, Nick did a very unladylike trick.

Throwing himself on his hands he turned a cart-wheel, then shouted:

"Got 'em! Fixed 'em! Dey'll be busted by Nick!" when the front door bell rang and brought him to his senses.

"Taint my biz ter answer der door!" he murmured, as he rapidly cleared up the room and entered another. "Let der rooster ring!"

"Ding-dingle-ding!" went the bell, but Extree worked on, pausing now and then to dance a few steps of a jig. It was such a lark to be on the track of his enemies, and above all to be masquerading in girl's clothes.

Having fixed the bedrooms, he explored the first floor, which was evidently used as a billiard and reception-room; then peeping beneath the sun-shades beheld Budd Ketchum, who was on the top of the stoop dancing and swearing like a lunatic.

Presently he seized the bell-handle and gave it another vicious drag, causing Extree to laugh in his sleeve.

"I'll let him in," he thought. "It's getting dark, an' he won't know me." So, proceeding to the door, he opened it an inch, saying, in an assumed voice:

"Who's there?"

"Captain Sniffin," answered Budd. "Are you the gal who does the chores? If so, Bill says yer ter let me in."

Nick permitted him to enter, whereupon the fellow marched past him as though he were dirt.

"Come," he said, "where's der matches?"

"How do I know," snapped Extree, imitating a girl's voice. "Find out, mister!"

Budd rummaged about the room for awhile, then once more demanded:

"Where's der matches? I'm in a hurry!"

Nick felt half inclined to tell him to scratch his ear and trot, but knew if he did that it would spoil his game, so remained silent.

At length Budd obtained a light, and, opening a cupboard in the back parlor, proceeded to pull some heavy packages from the tail of his coat; as he did so one of them burst, scattering its contents, which he carefully searched for and recovered.

As he was groping on the floor, Extree entered the room, saying:

"Can I help you, mister?" when, noticing that he had a nice, smooth face, Budd pitched the broken package into the cupboard and said:

"Haven't I seen yer somewhere else?"

"Ain't you Mr. Budd Ketchum, the masher?" simpered Nick, putting his forefinger into his mouth; at the same time stooping and slyly securing a bright nickle that lay on the floor.

"Hush!" whispered the fellow. "Yea, my name is Budd. Would yer like to go ter the theater some night, honey?"

"Yes," simpered Extree, "if ma'll let me."

"Look here," winked the thief. "Has yer mar got a watch an' any jewelry?"

Nick nodded, whereupon the cur turned to depart, saying:

"Borrey'em, den, say dis day week; dress yerself in yer best duds, and I'll take yer to der theater. We'll have a good time."

"Yea!" chuckled Nick, as the coward thief quitted the house. "Yer bet we'll have a good time, Mister Noble Budd!"

CHAPTER XVII.

OUR HERO RECEIVES HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

WHEN Budd was well out of the way, Extree left the house, and returned to Mrs. Rudolph's, where he found Josie very anxious about his safety.

"Don't you worry," he said. "They don't know me from Adam, and even if they did, I should bounce 'em."

"Extree," said the girl, as she marked the nickel J. P., "will you take my advice?"

"Course I will, Josie," he replied.

"Will you tell Mr. McNally about this, and hear what he says; he's got a clear head, and will give you good, sound counsel. Now, just tell him all to-morrow?"

"Right you are, Josie," he said, "I will," laughingly adding, "Yer sure Mr. Tom ain't mashed ober yer?"

"Extree," she smilingly replied, "if you say anything more about that, I'll marry the marble masher. Poor old chap! You should have seen him open his eyes when I told him to scratch his ear an' trot!"

"Josie," he said, "I wasn't surprised dat yer dazzled der old man. Yer awful nice."

"Oh, you get out, Miss Meriar," she retorted. "I'm not half so pretty as you are in those clothes," alluding to his feminine garments. "If the old man saw you now, what would he do?"

Nick retired to the door of his own room; then turning, said:

"What 'ud he do, Josie? Why, he'd jes scratch his ear an' trot!" then vanished to change his costume.

The next day, after serving his paper route, he called upon Mr. Tom.

"Well?" said that gentleman, glancing up from his writing.

"Fust of all began Nick, "I've got ter thank yer for—" when his friend interrupted him with:

"I understand; go and tell me about the coiners."

"Yer've bin real good," continued Extree, determined to somehow say what was uppermost in his mind; but Mr. Tom would not listen, so he changed the subject, whereupon the gentleman paid him every attention, and when he had concluded, laughingly observed:

"You're a bold boy, Extree."

"Dey kean't fool Nick," was his ready reply. "I tell you, boss, I'm goin' ter pin dem detectives jes' like dem bugs yer've got dere," pointing to a glass-case containing preserved butterflies. "Yer awful kind ter pay fur dat stone fur my father an' mother's grave."

Pretending not to heed this, and after thinking awhile, his friend said:

"Come down town with me," then away they started, presently arriving at the Treasury Building, when Mr. Tom paused, saying:

"Stay outside here; I will send for you shortly. Don't quit this spot."

"Yer bet I won't!" he said.

Just then Joe, who frequented Wall street, hurriedly passed him, upon which he said:

"Where yer goin' pard?"

"Extree jes' out!" answered the boy. "Loss of a steamship."

"Bring a lot here for me!" he shouted.

In a short time back came Joe with a heavy load, and, pitching him half, continued his course, crying:

"Yar—here yar extree! Fulle 'count ob de loss ob de steamship!" whereupon our hero laid his pile on the steps of the Treasury Building, and folding the papers, joined in the shout.

"Yar—here yar extree."

"What ship is lost?" demanded a well-known millionaire, who was too mean to pay for the information.

"Buy a paper an' find out, boss," laughingly answered the merry newsboy; hearing which the wealthy money-grubber scowled, and said:

"You're a saucy whelp."

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot," grinned Nick. "Yer want a extree, don't yer? Maybe yer uncle has bin lost an' left yer all his stamps; yer look as if yer want a new outfit."

The millionaire waited until a lot of the papers were sold, then borrowed one from a boy.

That man still lives, he being too mean to die. "Yar!" cried Nick, holding the last extree between his finger and thumb.

"Give it to me," said Mr. Tom, descending the steps. "Extree, you are required in here."

The boy handed his friend the paper and followed him to an inner apartment, where a gentleman was seated at a cabinet desk.

"This is Extree Nick," said Mr. Tom. "I will retire."

In lieu of putting on frills the official kindly said:

"So you are the newsboy who was falsely imprisoned? Mr. McNally tells me that you are a regular little detective."

"Yer bet I kin see funder den some ob dem perfeshnuls," said Nick.

"Now, tell me your story," said the other, "All of it, including the robbery?"

Extree began at his taking the news-stand, and related all his experiences, adding nothing, concealing nothing, and telling the plain, unvarnished truth.

Sometimes the official smiled, and at others averted his face as though deeply moved.

When Nick concluded, he inquired:

"Well, what is your theory?"

Extree glanced merrily at him, saying:

"Seuse me, boss; yer've got me, dead."

"How?" inquired the gentleman.

"Yer sed sunthin' 'bout a fear-eye! I'm in der news biz."

"Oh, I see," answered the official. "What is your idea with regard to these men?"

"Yer mean what's dey're little game, boss?" he grinned.

The other nodded.

"Are them nickels good?" demanded Extree, pointing to the change he had received from the girl and the change he had picked up in the parlor of the Smasher's house.

"Counterfeit!" answered the gentleman; "they are very excellent imitations, and none but an expert could tell them from the genuine. I see that you have marked them."

"Den I'll tell yer," said Nick. "When Mr. McNally gave me leave to open a news-stand, Uncle Jonas, as der gal called him—"

"His name is Jonas Tover," observed the official. "We have long wanted to convict him."

"Tover," murmured Nick, "I'll remember dat. Well, boss, when Uncle Dover Tover found I was hurtin' his biz—for I was more civil dan his folks—he set Budd Ketchum on ter me, an' got his pals, der detectives, ter shadder me. Den dey put up some one ter burgle der safe, an' der cracks got surprised ober der job an' stowed der swag in my stand. Findin' dis, dey pounced on ter me, an' swore black was white; but Mr. Tom stuck ter me, an' Josie an' Joe worried out der evidence about Budd, an' I was let off."

"Why don't you secure this Budd?" inquired the gentleman.

"Der perlice won't touch him," said the boy.

"Sides," with a grin, "he's goin' ter take me to the theater next week. I've chatted it over with Josie an' Joe, an' we ain't goin' ter touch Budd until we scoop in der others."

"You were born to be a detective," said the official.

"No," he smilingly answered, "I was born to be a newsboy, boss."

The gentleman thought for a few moments, then said:

"There is a reward of a thousand dollars offered for the capture and conviction of this gang. Do you know where this money is coined?"

"Warn't made in der house," returned Extree. "Budd brought dis from de country."

"How do you know?" demanded the other.

"Because he had der New Jersey clay on his butes," quickly replied the boy. "Yer kean't fool Nick!"

"My lad," said the official, "keep on as you are doing, and report daily to Mr. McNally, who will communicate with me. I want the man who coined this money. Don't move further until you can find him out. Now go ahead; I'll protect you."

"Boss," he grinned, "Nick'll do der trick!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SA-RAH AND ME-RI-AR.

ALL that day Extree stuck to the news business like a leech does to a full-blooded man, and at dusk, assuming his disguise, proceeded up-town.

The house was deserted, and he made a tour through the rooms.

It was quite evident to him that the gang was a most powerful one, and that they all slept there.

This accounted for the large number of newspapers he delivered to them every day.

In one room was a big, wide, open fire-place, over which a ventilator was placed, so as to free the top of the apartment from heated air.

Nick looked up the chimney and saw that just below the ventilator were two iron bars, built into the masonry, in order to prevent robbers from descending that way.

"Ah—ah!" he cried, "I'll fix yer, me bullies!" with which he ascended to the attic and through the scuttle to the roof.

To his surprise and annoyance he discovered that the chimney ran up through the ridge-pole, rendering it impossible for him to descend from the top; however, as he returned through the attic, the idea struck him that he might reach the flue at that point, which would be better than walking on the roof.

"I kean't do it ter-day, anyhow," he said. "Dem coons never comes up here, an' I kin take me time."

Returning to the lower floors, he completed his chamber work, and quitted the house.

When he told Josie and Joe his secret, she said:

"Extree, you must have some one with you."

"Take me!" said Joe.

"An' get yer mashed like a skeeter," laughed Nick.

"Don't yer fret," smilingly answered his pard; "I kin make up a Jew gal; my hair is long and black; an' mother kin curl it on a 'bakker-pipe.'"

"Who's ter serve the evening papers?" said his mother.

"I can," observed Josie. "I will go up-town with them, leaving Joe and Extree at the stand. We're bound to carry this thing through, and fix those wretches. Fancy how many poor folks those counterfeiters get into trouble! Just think of a widow woman with only a few nickels left on Saturday, goes to the store to buy bread for the next day, storekeeper discovers her five-cent pieces are counterfeits; hands her over to the police; and leaves her little ones to starve. That's what forgers and smashers do."

"They're worse than highway robbers!" said Mrs. Rudolph. "I think that Extree will do poor folks a service if he roots the gang out."

That evening Joe was dressed in a suit of girl's clothes, borrowed from a neighbor, and at dark followed Extree out of the house. As they sat side by side in the street cars, they looked like an Irish and a Jewish help, Joe's tiny black ringlets shingling like little Japanned-steel springs.

Upon arriving at the house they found Bill, the man who had engaged Extree, or rather the boy's imaginary sister, sick in bed.

"I've brought my little sister," simpered Nick, in a woman's voice. "I'm afraid to go about the house alone."

"All right," moaned the sick man. "Fix my room—I can't get up. Turn down the gas; it hurts my eyes."

Joe noticed that the fellow was wounded in the head, and that one of his hands was bandaged.

"May I fan you?" he timidly asked, endeavoring to imitate Extree's feminine voice, while Nick lowered the gas.

"Thank yer, sis," he said.

During the time that Nick was cleaning up the apartments, Joe fanned the sufferer, saying:

"Getting warm, isn't it?"

"Yea," said the man. "Hark! there's a ring at the door. Go and see who it is, my dear. There's a light in the hall."

When the boy was gone, Bill laughed to himself, saying:

"What a funny little girl—her voice is like her sister's! Darned if I didn't almost laugh in her face! Curse that watchman! he's spoilt my right hand—taken off the tips of three of my fingers."

Presently Joe came back, saying:

"It's Mr. Black."

"Tell him to come right up," answered Bill.

"Here I am," said a voice outside the door, and in came Detective Green, disguised and wearing a false beard, one of the men who had given Extree away on his first trial. Joe knew him in an instant, while the man was utterly unconscious that the little fellow was a boy.

"Go on fanning me, sis," said the wounded man, adding to the detective, "You needn't mind this kid—she's green."

"You both are," thought Joe, fanning away as innocently as a little girl would have done. Spite of the man's disguise, Joe knew the visitor.

"You're in a bad fix," began the detective.

"The man is dying."

"Sorry for him!" laughed Bill.

"Sorry for you!" said Green, or Black, as he now called himself. "There's a reward out!"

"How much?" inquired the wounded man.

"Five hundred!" said the other.

"Why?" growled the patient. "It was a fair fight! He attacked me! Guess I'll have to go to Hermann's. I shall be safe there—but I can't move just yet!"

The detective laughed significantly, then whispered:

"You got a pile of swag—I'm not alone! What will you give? Piper and Snell must be fixed."

"A thou!" answered the man. "Not a darned cent more, and not that until this has blown over! Dern the gas, it's gone out. Never mind, the gal will soon return."

Joe was gradually fanning less briskly, as though going to sleep, and presently gave a little snore, while inwardly he felt ready to burst with laughter.

"We'll take five hundred down and the balance when you feel all O K," said Green, after a long pause. "We're holding a tramp in custody, and if you agree to our terms, we'll fix him—if not!" here he laughed.

"All right!" growled the wounded man.

"Come to-morrow."

It was pitch dark in the room, and snoring Joe was grinning like a clown in a circus.

"Sa-rah!" said Nick, entering with a lighted candle, "I'm ready to go home." But Joe was

fly and still pretended to be asleep, so Extree, who recognized his enemy the detective, softly whispered in his sister's ear: "Sa-rah, wake up! Ma will wonder where we've got to!"

Joe pretended to arouse with a start and to recommence fanning Bill, but the man laughingly observed:

"That will do for to-night, sis. There is ten cents for you to buy candy," handing him two counterfeit nickels. "You can leave the candle here. What's your name?" to Nick.

"Me-ri-ar," demurely answered Extree, turning and taking a sly squint at the detective's hand, at the same time murmuring: "Oh, I'm so frightened!"

"At me?" said the detective.

"Ye-th!" murmured the scamp, in his mincing, woman's voice. "I thought you was Mister Ket-chum."

"You must be green," snarled the officer. "My name is Black."

"Peugh!" sniffed Extree, like an angry girl. "I ain't so green as you are, neither. Come along, Sa-rah!" and seizing Joe by the arm, towed him down-stairs.

When they arrived in the basement they gave vent to their pent-up mirth; taking care, however, not to laugh too loud.

"Christopher!" ejaculated Nick. "I knowed it was Green by der scar on his hand."

"Oh, my thunder," gasped Joe. "Come along, Me-ri-ar. If I don't get out of this I shall bust with laffin'."

Josie examined the nickels brought by Joe, and handed them to Nick; who gave her a description of their adventures, then said:

"Bill is the man who committed that safe-robbery last night."

"Yes," she nodded. "I read it in the papers. He nearly killed the watchman."

"I'll report to Mr. Tom to-morrow," said Nick, marking the two coins "Joe," and preparing to retire.

"Good-night, Josie; good-night, sister Sa-rah?"

"Good-night, Me-ri-ar," grinned little Joe. "We've got the noble Green."

CHAPTER XIX.

CATCHING IT HOT.

THE next morning the papers were full of the death of the bank watchman, and when Extree and Joe told their story to Mr. Tom, the latter said:

"We've aimed at the dog and shot the cat! Good for you, Joe!"

"Sa-rah is small," observed Nick, admiringly, "but she's mighty smart!"

"I must see the treasury official first," mused their friend. "Murder is a serious crime! Stay here until I come back!"

"Can't we go on sellin' until ten?" urged Nick, who had an eye to business.

"Yes," answered the gentleman.

In a short time they were crying "Mornin' papers!" just like any ordinary newsboys.

Mr. Tom did not return until noon, when he called the lads in, saying:

"You must find where Hermann's is!"

"We'll try!" said Nick. "I guess it's some way out in New Jersey; I'll watch der house to-day?"

"No—you needn't do that," said Mr. Tom; "if you can get into the chimney, and stay there all day to-morrow, you may learn something. Take some food and a bottle of water and try it. The man Bill cannot move, and you can work as you like. Go earlier; your disguises are good, and if you have your wits about you, you will learn all that is required."

"If I kin make a hole inter der chimbley," said Extree, "I'll chance der rest—dere's bricks left in it—ter go up an' down upon, an' I kin climb like a cat!"

"Won't dey hear yer?" demanded Joe.

"Bless yer, no," he answered. "It's one ob dem old houses, not one built yesterday; der walls are as thick as a church, an' der chimbley is like a well."

Providing themselves with food and water—for Joe insisted upon accompanying Nick—they started for up-town, arriving about half after seven P. M., and finding the burglar very sick.

He dared not call in a surgeon, and his wounds were troubling him.

Green was with the man, and evidently had been at his mercy.

Hurriedly fixing the rooms, they crept up-stairs and began to examine their task.

"If we kin get one brick out," said Extree, "der job is did!"

Then gently tapping the paper covering the chimney: "Say—here's a hole been knocked for a stove-pipe!"

An old mattress lying in one corner of the attic, was dragged forward, and the bricks thrown upon it, the boys working like niggers.

Lighting a piece of wax-candle, brought from below, Extree peeped into the hole.

Every foot or two were projecting bricks, left to facilitate sweeping, or for some purpose in the construction of the fabric.

They enlarged the opening until it was level with the floor, after which Nick cautiously divested himself of his outer dress, leaving on his feminine undergarments, then began to descend.

In ten minutes he reappeared, saying:

"Go down to der next floor. I'll shout, kick and holler. If yer kean't hear, we're all safe."

Joe did as he was told; but, though he listened acutely, failed to hear any sound.

When he returned, Extree was up again, and, on seeing him, said:

"Hear anything?"

"Nary," said his pard.

"Yer see," said Nick, "der walls are thick. In der old times dey didn't build houses ob brown paper."

"Goin' down fur good?" asked Joe.

"Not much," laughed the other, raising the from the mattress. "I'm going ter have a bully night's rest."

When the rubbish was cleared off, the lads stretched themselves upon the moldy bed, and were soon fast asleep.

At daybreak they arose, when Extree, filling a good-sized bag with straw, pushed it into the chimney-hole.

"What's that fur?" demanded his companion.

"Well, yer see," answered Nick, "dere's such a awful draft in der chimbley dat we'd be a most blowed up it. Dis'll rest on der cross-bars an' keep us comfortable."

"Yer smart," said Joe. "Derned if yer ain't!"

Slowly Nick pushed the bag beneath him until it rested upon the bars and formed a nice perch.

When he returned aloft, he said to Joe:

"Only room fur one. Down yer go an' take fust spell. Der wentelator creaks if yer touch it."

"S'pose we has breakfast fust?" observed the little one.

"Good fur yer, Joe; s'pose we do," grinned Nick; and opening their basket they pitched in.

Bill's wife owned the house, but she never entered it, being detained in the official mansion at Sing Sing. Probably this was lucky for our boys.

When their meal was over, Joe cautiously lowered himself into the chimney, and was soon out of hearing, while Extree took another snooze.

Mrs. Rudolph had promised to tend the stand, and Josie delivered the morning papers to their up-town customers.

About eleven o'clock Joe crept up and woke his pard, saying:

"Dere's a reg'lar caucus meetin' in der parlor; Old Tover is dere, an' Budd an' der detectives. Way yer dive, Extree."

Nick descended the shaft like a greased patch goes down a gun, and peering through the ventilator of the reception-room, beheld a crowd, smoking and drinking.

"I tell you," said Uncle Jonas Tover, "let's drop it and break up the gang. It's getting too dangerous. I've got property!"

"Oh, paste up your mouth," said Budd, "we're doing a roaring trade. Did you ever show your hand in it?"

"No!" growled the old sinner.

"Then dry up," said the detective. "Didn't we fix you to rights over the gas company job?"

"You didn't get the swag!" snarled Tover.

"That was Bill's and your fault," tauntingly replied the other. "We fixed the newsboy for you."

Just then Extree's heart beat like a trip-hammer.

"Yes, an' let 'em suspect me," cried Budd, from the other end of the room. "Yer know I got a friend ter plant dem things under Extree's bed."

"Haven't we protected you since?" fiercely inquired the detectives, all in a breath. "Don't we wink at your decoying girls over to Brooklyn and taking them to your mother to be robbed? You dry up!"

"Well," said Budd, "I don't touch 'em; I'm only a roper-in."

"Order!" said Jonas. "Boys, which of you will volunteer to take poor Bill to Hermann's?"

"How far is it, and where?" demanded one of the rowdies. "I'm wanted in Brooklyn, so I can't go there."

"Jersey," said Jonas.

"How much sugar?" inquired the fellow. "It's dangerous to be seen in a carriage with a sick man. You detectives"—turning to Piper—"are so smart."

"A hundred," said Jonas, who seemed to be their boss.

"Not for Alfred," laughed the cut-throat.

"I'll do it," offered Snell. "I am supposed to be working up the case."

"When will you come to fetch him?" asked Jonas.

"To-night at seven o'clock," was the reply.

Just then one of the crowd threw a lighted match on the hearth, which was choked with old newspapers.

These burnt like flax, and, ere Extree was aware of the fact, the straw beneath his feet ignited.

"My gracious!" he moaned; then grasping the bricks above him, scrambled upwards, the flames scorching his thinly-clad lower limbs.

CHAPTER XX.

ME-RI-AR GETS DISCHARGED.

"HELLO!" cried Uncle Jonas Tover, for Extree's cry had reached him through the ventilator.

Never for a moment dreaming that any one was concealed in the chimney, and imagining that the noise had proceeded from Bill, who was in the room above, the venerable rascal continued his conversation, while half-roasted Nick reached the opening in the shaft, and landed blinded upon the attic floor.

A rush of hot air and smoke followed him and filled the place, so that for some time they could scarcely see, while Extree's lower limbs felt as though they had been scalded.

"What's matter?" cried Joe, starting from the mattress, where he had enjoyed a luxurious sleep.

"Quick!" cried Nick; "open der scuttle an' let der smoke out."

Joe did as he was directed, and soon the vapor melted away.

"What's der matter wid yer legs?" he demanded, glancing at Extree's highly-colored limbs.

"Yer look as red as a lobster."

"Joe," he moaned, for the pain was something terrible, "go down-stairs an' see if yer kin find some fat; if not go out an' buy half a pound of fresh butter. Yer kin let yerself out an' in. If yer go easy no one'll notice yer, an' if dey does, say yer come ter see der sick man."

Arranging his wavy curls before a piece of mirror, nailed against the dormer window, Joe gave his feminine garments a shake, then descended, reaching the basement stairs without being detected, and presently emerging into the street.

In his red stuff frock, thin cloak, shade hat, white stockings and low shoes, he looked just like a little Jewish girl on an errand, so no one troubled him.

Entering a grocery store on the avenue, he purchased half a pound of fresh, country butter, then returned to the house.

"Hello," said a man he encountered on the basement stairs. "Who are you, hey?"

"If you please," he piped, imitating a Jewish girl's voice, "I'm Sarah Jacobs, come to see the sick man! My sister does chores here."

"All right, go on," growled the old fellow, who was no other than Jonas Tover, and up-stairs glided the boy.

Placing the butter in the hall, he knocked at the door of Bill's room, saying:

"Kin I come in, mister?"

"Come," answered the wounded one.

"How are yer dis mornin'?" began the boy.

"Oh, is that you, sis?" observed Bill. "Go up-stairs and wait a few minutes, then come down again, I want to see you."

Joe was glad of this, and seizing the butter scooted up to Extree, who was suffering considerable pain.

"Got der cart grease?" he cried.

"Yes," answered Joe.

"Now," said Nick, "rub it all over my limbs fur me, for I kean't stoop."

Joe laid the butter on an eighth of an inch thick, and soon the heat began to quit Extree's skin, and he said:

"That's spiffin', I feel it doin' me good already. How did yer git it, pard?"

Joe briefly related his adventure with Tover.

"Guess they are goin' to shut dis shanty up," mused Nick. "Yer go down, Joe, and hear what Mr. Bill has ter say."

The boy gave his petticoats a shake, in order to ascertain whether they were all O. K., then descended.

Bill was sitting up and looked as pale as death.

"Sis," he said, "where's Maria? I want to see her."

"I can fetch her in half an hour," said Joe.

"Good," answered the man. "Way you go."

Just then Uncle Jonas and Piper, the detective, entered the room, whereupon Bill observed:

"Here's the sister of the gal who does chores! I'm going to send for her to take care of the house."

"Shut it up," growled Uncle Jonas.

Joe closed the door and swiftly passed upstairs. In several of the rooms, men whom he had never before seen were busily engaged in packing their luggage.

For some months the house had been the place of refuge of a regular gang of bank robbers and counterfeiters, but Bill's trouble was causing them to seek other quarters.

On rejoining Extree, Joe said:

"How d'yer feel, pard?"

"Dat butter acted like a charm," replied Nick. "I'm red an' tender an' can't sit down, but it will soon pass off. I ain't lost no skin."

"Gosh," said Joe, "yer kum outer dat chimbley like a shot outer a gun."

"Nuff to make a fellow git," groaned the boy.

"Kin yer put on yer duds an' see Bil?" inquired Joe.

"Yea," answered our hero. "Glad I took me false hair off or I should hev bin in a nice hole. We must hurry up or der bird will hop afore we kin set der trap."

After laying on some more butter, Extree dressed himself in his feminine garb, then descended to Bill's room.

The clothes chafed his blistered hips and pained him fearfully, but he bore it like a little man.

"Maria," said the burglar and murderer, "I'm going away from here."

"Am I going to lose my place?" said Extree, in a shrill tone, like a girl who is injured.

"Here's your wages," said the man, handing him a roll of new five-cent nickels. "Now clear."

"All in that stuff?" piped Nick.

"Don't yer like it?" demanded the man. "You're nasty pertickler. Well, that's all you'll get; now give me the key and go."

Extree took the counterfeits, saying:

"Guess it's all O. K.; then handing him the pass-key, returned with Joe, and hurried out of the house.

A hack-carriage was standing opposite the door, seeing which, Nick, who knew the driver, asked the man:

"Are you waiting for Mr. Tover's party?"

"Yea," he replied; "he paid me, and said if I liked to stop on my own hook I could."

"Well, yer needn't stay any longer. Say, what'll yer charge ter take us ter Extree's news-stand in Broadway? I know yer; yer Mr. Baxter."

"Who are you?" said the man.

"Friends ob yer nephew, Big Jemmy," simpered the boy.

"Well, jump in," answered the man. "You'll pay me all right, won't you?"

"Here's the money," returned Extree, handing him a dollar, and following Joe into the carriage.

On seating himself he found that the motion of the vehicle chafed him so that he was obliged to give up his position and stand, while Joe, who enjoyed the ride, observed:

"It's as good as goin' ter a funeral, hey?"

"Yea," piped his companion, "it's very much like it ter me. I feel wuss thin any corpse!"

"Sore?" said Joe.

"Sore!" he responded. "Sore ain't no name fur it. I'm as raw as a beefsteak."

Upon arriving at the stand, they saw Josie, who opened her eyes at them.

"What's the matter?" she inquired, as Extree jumped across to the stand. "Come in, miss," with which she opened the door of the stall.

Nick tucked one of the stray ringlets behind his ear, and, in spite of the pain, laughed, saying:

"No yer don't, Josie. Dey ain't caught yet," then hobbled into Mr. Tom's office.

"Sit down," said his friend. "You look first-rate in girl's clothes."

"Scuse me," muttered Extree. "I kean't sit down; my—my limbs are scorched. I may look first-rate as a gal, boss, but I feel awful queer." Then, turning pale, he staggered and fell fainting to the floor.

"Quick, Joe, some water," cried Mr. Tom.

"What has he been up to?"

Joe hurriedly filled a mug at the faucet, saying:

"He ain't bin up, boss; he's bin half-cooked down a chimbley."

CHAPTER XXI.

GRABBING TWO OF THEM.

WHEN Extree recovered he begged to be taken home; so Mr. Tom sent for an ambulance and had him conveyed to Mrs. Rudolph's, following himself, and, when the boy was comfortably in bed, sending for a doctor, who said that the soreness would cease in a day or two, and that putting the butter on his skin had saved him from losing it.

After adding more grease and flouring to Nick's

burn, the doctor wrapped him tightly in a sheet, saying:

"Keep that on you for four-and-twenty hours and you will be all right;" then quitted.

By that time it was three o'clock.

"I've sent to the Treasury, and the gentleman will call here before four," said Mr. Tom.

As he was speaking, Mrs. Rudolph announced a strange visitor. "Let him come in," replied Extree, and in a few moments the official was by his bedside.

Joe, who was still in girl's clothes, endeavored to withdraw, but Nick stayed him.

"Well, Extree," said the gentleman, taking his hand, "so they smoked you out, hey?"

"No, boss!" he quietly returned. "Dey burnt me out!" then, in his graphic way, detailed what he had heard and seen, and handed him the nickels.

"You're a pair of brave boys!" observed their visitor, marking the coins B. "Where is Joe?"

"Sa-rah!" said Extree, mimicking a woman's voice, "where is Joe?"

"I'm Joe!" chuckled the lad, pretending to be bashful.

"You?" demanded the official.

"Yes, boss!" grinned the little chap. "I'm Joe!"

The gentleman thought a while, then said:

"Joe, do you think you can follow that carriage to-night? Your chum is too sick to move!"

"I'll try," answered the boy.

"The man Bill is wanted for the brutal murder of that unfortunate watchman," continued the official; "at the same time, in arresting him, we wish to secure Snell, the detective."

"Now, you get on behind the coach, and upon arriving at the ferry, descend; then, when you reach the Jersey shore, and an officer speaks to you, saying: 'Is that the carriage?' reply, 'Yes.' If we catch them on this side Snell would swear that he was doing his duty, and was on his way to the police office with his man. If we arrest him in New Jersey, it will be different."

"An' Mr. Jonas Tover?" inquired Extree.

"Can't yer rest him, boss?"

"We must first secure the murderer, then we'll unearth the others," answered the official.

"You'll have all your work cut out for some time!"

That night two detectives watched Joe, who, clad in his own clothes, was lounging about the street, near Bill's house, pretending to be selling papers.

Precisely on time Snell arrived in a hack-carriage, and, alighting, entered the house.

While the driver waited, Joe slid up to him, saying:

"Wanter evenin' paper, boss? Give yer one if yer'll lemme ride down-town wid yer."

"Up yer git!" said the man. And soon Joe was by his side.

The blinds of the vehicle were closely drawn, and, once in, Snell would not notice the boy.

Presently Bill, closely muffled in a great coat, emerged from the house, and slowly descending the steps, climbed into the vehicle; Snell following him, bearing a small heavy package, which he deposited in the carriage. Then, returning, locked up the house and approaching the driver, said:

"Jersey City Ferry," after which he stepped into the vehicle, and closed the door.

As they started, the detectives mounted a light buggy, standing lower down the street, and followed them.

These officers were Treasury detectives; not the political bums who, under that title, disgraced our police force.

They were provided with warrants obtained from the New Jersey authorities, and had everything nicely fixed.

Upon arriving at the ferry, Joe alighted, thanked the driver of the vehicle, and when it had passed him, ran behind, holding on lightly; following them being the buggy containing the detectives.

There were a number of carriages waiting outside the ferry; so Joe, still keeping his eye on "the one," paid his fare, and awaited the vehicles passing through, when he resumed his old position in the rear of Bill's conveyance.

After they were fairly aboard the ferry-boat, one of the detectives alighted, and approaching the boy, said:

"Is that the carriage?"

"Yes," whispered the boy.

"Can you drive?" inquired the man.

"Yes," smirked Joe, thinking that he would like to try.

"Jump up, then, into that buggy," answered the detective, "and follow us."

Joe clambered upon the driver's seat, and took the reins from the second detective, a quiet, resolute-looking man, who, without saying a word, alighted and joined his companion.

"Now for it!" thought the boy, who was thoroughly aroused by the affair. "We'll fix two ob der gang, anyhow."

In a few moments they arrived at the Jersey shore, and the carriage ahead was driven up the incline, where two detectives belonging to the Jersey force joined the Treasury men.

Joe started his horse and drove after the party, his eyes twinkling with excitement.

"Wish Extree was here," he muttered.

Once outside the dark gates, the detectives ranged themselves upon each side of Bill's vehicle, then bidding the driver halt, lowered the windows from the outside, and presenting their revolvers cried:

"Surrender! we want you for murder!"

Bill was about to discharge his pistol at one of the men, but the latter knocked it out of his hand, when he yielded and was ironed.

"He's my prisoner," said Snell, as calmly as you please.

"Too thin! You're ours!" returned one of the Treasury men. "Jim Snell—you've disgraced the profession long enough!" with which he clapped the bracelets upon the scoundrel who, employed by justice to detect thieves, had been their friend and accomplice.

"All right, I guess!" said the New York detectives; "where's the nearest police office? We must have this transfer legally done."

"Close by," answered the Jerseyman.

"Joe," inquired the man who had just spoken to him, "will you drive over to Police Headquarters and tell the superintendent that we have captured Bill Junker, the murderer of the bank watchman, and Snell, the detective, and that there's a heavy box of specie in the carriage."

"Yea," answered the boy.

In another moment he was on his way across the river.

On arriving at the City Hall he delivered his message to the authorities, delivered up the buggy, and quitting the building, rushed across to the Telegram office, where he repeated his story, which was taken down verbatim by a short-hand writer.

"Now," said the night editor, "telegraph to our New Jersey office, and if this boy is right pay him ten dollars; meanwhile, set up the matter and have it ready for an extra."

Joe waited until a reply came from New Jersey, when he received his reward.

Before he quitted the office the matter was in form, and the pressmen were ready to begin.

Rushing home he told Extree of the good news, then returned in time to get some of the first copies of the edition.

Within two hours after the murderer was captured, Joe was tearing up town, yelling:

"Yar—here yar extree! Full count ob de 'rest ob de murderer an' his pal, Detective Snell."

CHAPTER XXII.

GIVING BUDD A LIFTER.

THAT night Bill Junker ended his life by shooting himself through the head, and the next morning when they opened Snell's cell he was found absent.

"His political chums," that is old Jonas, had bribed the keepers of the lock-up, and he had escaped, while the treasure captured with him also vanished, presumably into the hands of the police.

The Treasury officials were baffled, as they thought, by securing Shell, they would hear where the counterfeit money was made.

Two weeks passed, and Extree had long recovered from his singe, when, one day in a cross street above Fourteenth, he spied Budd Ketchum.

Piper and Green had disappeared from the force, and their families had quitted the city, added to which, Jonas had sold his interest in his news-stand and cleared out with the rest.

Notwithstanding all this New York was flooded with the counterfeit five-cent pieces.

The detectives offered to share the \$500 reward with the newsboys; but Extree said:

"No, thank yer. I don't want ter take blood-money!"

The Treasury officer gave the lads a sum they considered was sufficient to repay them for their services, and money with which to purchase complete female disguises, the garments of which were made for them by Josie and Mrs. Rudolph.

Nick bought a fair wig with fluffy curls, which suited his complexion, and Joe invested in a sort of hairy mop, made up of tiny corkscrew ringlets.

"Yer bet we'll have a lark an' fix dem jockies dis time!" grinned Nick. "Fust of all I must meet Mr. Budd an' give him a licking for what he did to you, Joe! I must borry my ma's watch and chain and go to the theater with him."

Everything being fixed, one night the boy

dressed themselves in their new disguises and quietly walked up town.

Extree had a neat blue - patterned muslin frock — white undergarments, stoutish, girl's boots, a gray, light shawl, and a white straw hat trimmed with blue ribbons, while Joe wore darker clothes and had red trimmings to his costume.

"Sa-rah?" murmured Nick, "isn't the night lovely."

"Yes, Me-ri-ar!" said Joe. "Shall we walk on Seventh avenue and see the fashions, dear?" whereupon Extree whispered:

"Oh, scratch yer ear and trot."

The boys proceeded on their way, and presently arrived at the street in which Extree had seen Budd.

After promenading up and down for some time, Joe said:

"He aint been round to-night, Me-ri-ar;" when a voice behind them observed:

"Wot, me little sweetness! I've been a lookin' fur yer!"

"Oh!" said Nick, in a timid, feminine voice. "Sarah, it's that awful masher, Captain Sniffin;" that being the name Budd had called himself at Bill's.

"Yea!" laughed the sneak thief, "I live in this street; my ma owns a lot of houses!"

It being a hot night, Joe said:

"I wish your ma kept an ice cream saloon!"

"I've got an aunt who runs one up-town!" he replied, "if either of you young ladies would like to go with me, I will treat you."

"We always go together; don't we, Sa-rah?" minced Nick.

"Very well then;" he said, "come along;" with which he offered an arm to each of them; thinking to himself, "their clothes are good."

Budd was connected with a gang of old women, who prowled about deserted places and plunder girls and children; regular highway robbers.

He was too great a cur to despoil his own victims.

His plan was to decoy an unsuspecting girl on to some vacant lot, around the boarding of which crouched the old hags, awaiting his coming, when he would lead his companion into an ambush, from which she generally emerged minus all but her underclothes and an old gown, tossed her by one of the she fiends.

Hundreds of poor girls had thus been plundered, and, being ashamed to own that they were smitten with Budd's taking, oily ways, had kept their losses to themselves.

For once in his life, Mr. Budd was destined to be sold, and receive what the police and lawyers had failed to procure him.

He was in high spirits, and lied like a man sentenced to be hanged.

"Do yer like wenilly cream or lemin?" he said to Nick, who could scarcely restrain his mirth.

"I like strawberry," whispered the choking boy.

"Aint it awful nice ter go out wid a young man?" Budd observed to Joe.

"Ye-th," lisped the scamp.

"Would you like some strawberry, too?" the bully murmured.

"Ye-th," said Joe; thinking to himself, "oh, I'd give ten cents ter hev a good laugh."

After walking a considerable distance, he led them into a vacant lot near the Central Park.

"Oh, captain," said Extree, drawing back and speaking like a frightened girl. "There aint no cream store here;" when Budd grabbed him by the arm, and, placing his left fingers in his own mouth, was about to whistle a signal, when Nick wrenched away from him, and gave him a "rum un" under the chin, following it up "two, three, four," and landing him in a pool of liquid manure at the back of an old cow-shed; then, seizing a rail, wanged him over the head and ears until he ducked in the foul stuff in order to avoid the newsboy's blows; Joe laughing merrily.

Hearing the struggle, five old hags came rushing to Budd's assistance; whereupon the boys stood back to back and awaited the charge.

Uttering various foul war-cries, the murderous critters precipitated themselves upon the lads, whom they mistook for two plucky Irish girls.

First one and then another of the old creatures received a "floorer;" and, finally, only a solitary fiend remained upon her feet.

It was Budd's mother; who had come to live in New York.

Drawing a revolver, she leveled it at Extree, saying:

"Drop it, gal, or I'll shoot ye;" when Nick knocked the weapon out of her grasp, and closing on the fury, gripped her by the knees and threw her over his left shoulder, head first among the muck.

Half raising, nicely painted, she shook her fist at the panting boy, saying:

"You sassy wench, lemme ever get my grab

on yer agin!" when the lads lifted one of her companions and swung her a-top of the speaker; then, picking up the others head and feet, landed them in the same hole.

Their language was something awful, as foul as their resting-place, while Budd tremblingly said:

"My ga-ga-gracious! yer gals hev got der muscle ob a kuppel ob prize-fighters."

"Look here," cried Nick, flourishing a stake that had been used to scare many of the hags' victims, "Mr. Noble Budd Ketchum, how d'yer like our strawberry cream? Don't yer know me?"

"No," snarled the fellow, while his mother and the other women swore fearfully.

"Yer don't!" laughed our hero. "Well, yerve bin fooled and licked by Extree Nick, the news-boy, and his pard, little Joe, der boy yer half killed ober in Brooklyn."

Then, turning, he added:

"An' now d'yer know what ter do?"

"No," growled the beaten bully.

Our hero gave a chuckle, then said:

"Yer kin scratch yer ear an' trot. Nick'll do yer trick ter rights afore long. I ain't done wid yer yet, me Noble Budd."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WAY THAT THEY CIRCULATED THE NICKELS.

WHEN our boys reached home, they found Josie disturbed over a letter she had that evening received.

"What's matter?" inquired Extree.

"Nothing, *Miss Me-ri-ar!*" she replied in a half crying tone; then, without any apparent reason, began to laugh.

"Scurious!" murmured Nick.

"What's matter?" asked Joe, taking off his wig and wiping his perspiring forehead.

"Oh, bother—Sa-rah—*nothing!*" she cried, then retiring to her own room.

"Suthin's wrong!" ejaculated Extree, glancing after her; when Mrs. Rudolph, who was busily engaged in mending a pair of Joe's pants, looked up and observed:

"Don't worry Josie, she's put out and puzzled! If you leave her to herself awhile she will come round!"

"Mother," whispered Joe, "spose I go out an' get a quart of cream, Budd didn't give us any, an' I'm red hot."

"Good idea," nodded Mrs. Rudolph, who was his banker; "here's forty cents," giving him the stamps. "Go to Cornstarch & Thickening's, on the corner."

While the little chap was shifting his garments, Nick whispered to Mrs. R.

"Say, what's up wid Josie?"

"She's put out," answered the good woman.

"Anybody bin sassin' her?" he demanded.

"No," answered his landlady. "Go and change your things. Extree, she'll tell you when you are yourself."

"Yea," he grinned, moving toward the door, "I furgot dat I am *Miss Me-ri-ar!*" then vanished.

Presently Joe entered for a bowl, and having procured it, retired, whistling a quickstep.

When all was quiet, Josie glided in and, seating herself by Mrs. Rudolph, said:

"What shall I do? Extree'll feel awful mad!"

"He's a good fellow," soothingly returned her friend. "Tell him all and ask his advice."

Just then Nick came in, seeing which, their hostess picked up her work and withdrew.

Josie was seated upon a lounge, with her head bowed and her face averted from him, so he marched up, settled himself by her side, placed his hand on her shoulder, and said:

"Come, my dear, tell Extree yer trouble?"

Slowly her pretty head turned until their eyes met, when she looked at him earnestly, saying:

"You *trust* me, don't you?"

"Ray-ther," he cried. "Now you *trust* me, Josie."

"It's the good old marble chipper," she began, taking the letter from her pocket.

"Blame him! Bin writing ter yer?" he sharply inquired.

"Don't blame him, Extree," she said; "he's dying."

"*Humph!*" ejaculated the lad—as much as to say: "Well, I'm not particularly sorry."

"Yes," said Josie, "he's dying of consumption."

"Whisky," he suggested. "He seemed half-squiffy that morning."

"You're unkind," she continued. "Read that note. A boy brought it this morning," with which she handed him the following scrawl:

"MARBLE WORKS,

"Near the Cemetery, July 3d, 18—

"MISS JOSIE PERRY:—Your friend, Mr. Mulligan, is at the pint of deth—I rite these few words

to ask if u will kum toe sea him to morro even-ing about 8—he sez he kan't di unless he seas you.

MRS. ANDREW MULLIGAN."

Extree Nick spelt this out, then said:

"It's a stall!"

"You're too bad," she replied. "It's our duty to visit the sick."

"Yes," said Mrs. Rudolph, who, that moment, re-entered, "it's your duty, Josie. Who knows but that the old skinflint may leave you all his money?"

"I don't care about that," remarked the girl; "but I hate to think any one should die and feel that I had treated them badly. I should never forgive myself."

"You're a good girl, Josie," said Nick. "We'll go. To-morrow is the Fourth of July, and I'll borrow Smith's express wagon, and we'll ride in style."

The next day they rattled through their business and about four o'clock closed the stand.

"Looks nice ter see Extree, Josie an' Joe ober der shebang, don't it?" observed our hero to the girl, as they quitted the scene of their labor.

"Yes," she said.

As they were talking, an old woman, almost double with age, placed a small hand-organ upon the sidewalk near their stand, and began to grind out some cracked notes, intended for a tune.

They gave her a few pennies, and, as she raised her hand to take them, Extree noticed a peculiar scar on her thumb.

It was ex-detective Green.

"Poor old gal!" murmured Nick, "yer must hev bin good looking in yer time! Say, aunty, how old are yer?"

"Ninety!" answered the disguised man, who was wonderfully made up.

Extree's face turned purple through his endeavors to control his delight.

•lling his companion by the dress, he said, in a choking voice:

Come along, Josie. If we don't hurry up, yer old mash will be dead by der time we arrive!" then hastened her away from the spot.

As soon as they turned the corner into the next street, the boy burst into a roar of laughter, saying:

"Didn't yer know der old duck? Don't yer *conteever?*"

"No!" said the girl, wondering why he was so merry.

"Yer wait?" he said, checking himself. "Le'me go an' look at der cuss for a moment!"

Back he ran and, taking a position at the corner, watched the organ-grinder.

Presently a woman came across the road and handed the *hag* a dollar, whereupon he fumbled among his rags and gave her a small package, at the same time saying something that Extree could not hear.

Another and another customer arrived, many of them giving her five and ten dollar bills, and receiving in return proportionately large packages.

Among the purchasers, for the disguised man was selling counterfeit five cent nickles, was a rag-and-bone-man, who had left his cart in the street where Nick was standing.

"I'll fix yer!" mused the boy, moving towards Josie. "Dat's yer little game, hey?"

Presently the rag-and-bone man came down the roadway, jingling the bells of his cart and glancing round for customers.

When he arrived opposite Josie and our boy, the latter hailed him, saying:

"Boss, kin yer give us change fur a quarter?"

The man smiled, and taking out a package of the counterfeits, replied:

"Yes—where's yer stamp?"

"Here yer are!" grinned Nick, handing him a twenty-five-cent coin.

The bone collector broke the package in his hand, gave Extree five of the bright coins, and, dropping the balance into his pocket, went jingle, jingle down the street.

"Good!" said Nick. "Now, Josie, yer go right home an' I'll fetch der kerridge fur yer! I'll mark dese nickels *Rags!*"

Half an hour after that Extree, Josie, Mrs. Rudolph, and Joe were on their way to visit the dying marble-cutter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DIDN'T DO IT THAT TIME.

WOMAN-LIKE, Josie felt sorry for Mr. Mulligan's sickness, though otherwise she did not care a red cent about him, while Extree, who hated the old marble-smasher worse than poison, laughed at her thought about the man, saying:

"Consumption! pshaw, it's whisky. He *kean't* fool Nick."

"Where's the old rooster's house?" Joe inquired, as they neared the end of their destination.

"I don't know," replied Josie; "we'd best call at his office."

Driving on the Fourth of July is a somewhat dangerous business, and Extree was obliged to keep his eyes wide open.

Just as they arrived at Mulligan's place of business, an imp of a boy threw a package of lighted Chinese crackers into the road right under the horse's nose; but Nick was equal to the occasion.

The missile had come from a temporary fire-work store, a sort of polling-box placed on a vacant spot in Mulligan's marble-yard, and after firing them, the boy who had done the trick had quitted the structure.

Jumping from the driving-seat, Extree picked up the smoking string of lobster-leg-looking crackers and slung it into the store; right among a box of torpedoes, then, starting his horse at a rapid pace, remounted and drove over the brow of the hill.

Scarcely were they out of danger when "bang" went the torpedoes, and "bang-bang-bang" snapped the crackers, knocking the temporary structure into kindling, scaring its attendant almost out of his senses, and bringing together a crowd of inquisitive ladies and gents.

"Howly Mowes!" ejaculated one.

"Me graycious!" laughed another.

"Begorra!" shouted a third. "It's gone higher den Beecher!"

"An' made as much noise!" grinned a fourth.

"An' all through a little spark!" said a fifth.

"Well, well, anyhow dere's more smoke den fire in both cases."

Extree turned his horse's head and drove back, saying:

"What's up?"

"Sure," said a woman, "poor ould Mr. Mulligan's fire-cracker shop has gone up, an' him lyin' a-dying on his bed!"

"Where does he live?" asked our hero.

"Down dere, in the valley, beyant that hotel!" she replied, pointing to a frame building. "Are yez the friends he's expectin'?"

"Yes," nodded Dick, giving the reins a rattle.

In a few moments they reached the marble-clipper's residence, about the doors of which were congregated a number of half-drunken men, who, on seeing Josie, began to remark:

"Och, the darlin'; sure, ain't she swate, now?" etc.

"How is Mr. Mulligan?" said Extree, regarding them somewhat suspiciously.

"Sure, an' he's goin' fast," answered a man who looked like the marble masher's brother; then, turning to the girl, inquired, "Are yez Miss Josie? He's just living till he sees yez."

"Joe," whispered Ned, "take der reins and stand by ter start when we come out. I believe dey want ter serve us some trick, but they won't fool Nick;" with which he alighted.

Mrs. Rudolph and Josie descended from the vehicle and followed him into the house, a neat, handsomely-furnished dwelling.

In the extension parlor, on an extra double feather bed and black walnut bedstead, pale, clean shaven, and hollow-eyed, they beheld Mulligan, while near him, at a table, were a lawyer and a big fat man, who was introduced as Judge McGaffer.

Somewhat reassured by their presence, for Extree knew the judge by reputation, he motioned Josie and Mrs. Rudolph to advance, the rest of the crowd ranging like a minstrel chorus on the far side of the sick man's bed.

"Mrs. Perry," said the old fellow, in a feeble tone, "I believe that I am dying. Now, if I make a will to-day, and lave yez all me fortin', me family here an' in the ould country will say I am crazy. Ask der lawyer dere," nodding to the legal gentleman, "and he'll tell yez I made one will four years ago, an' ivery cint I lave will go to me widdy, *in' o'ever she is*."

"That is quite correct," said the lawyer, while Josie blushed and Mrs. Rudolph looked at the old fellow as though scarcely understanding what he was driving at.

Extree was afraid to speak, as he was full of laughter.

"Now, me darlin'," coaxingly continued the old man, taking Josie's shrinking hand in his withered right paw, "if ye'll marry a dying ould crayter—oh, don't cry—an' let me call ye me wife, ere I close me ould eyes, yez shall have me property, an' den yez kin wed yer bould newsboy! I don't ax der blessin' av the church on our weddin'—so yez won't have dat on yer sowl. All I want is, when I'm dead, for yez to have a laygal title to me property. Jes' say yez will have me, an' de jidge'll marry us."

"I couldn't!" said Josie, withdrawing her hand. "It would be a sin to marry you for the sake of your money!"

"Whist, now!" pleaded the old fellow, "I'm

worth tin thousand dollars in bonds. De jidge knows dat."

"I think the young lady is just splendid," said the judge, who wasn't half a bad man. "Not one girl in a hundred would be so honorable."

"Dat's why I want her to hev me money," said Mulligan, in a weak voice; then falling back exhausted, gasped out, "Quick!"

Josie, who was resting her cheek upon Nick's shoulder and holding his left hand, whispered to him, saying:

"Extree, tell the poor old man that I am sorry for him, but that—" here she paused, when our hero advanced to the bedside, and, stooping over the dying man, said in a clear voice:

"Boss, I want ter speak ter yer."

"Boy," feebly replied the marble-masher, "I can't talk to yez. What does the colleen say?"

Bending still lower, the scamp shouted right in the old rooster's sound-catcher:

"She says, mister, dat yer can scratch yer ear an' trot! *Con-leever*."

"What!" yelled Mulligan, rising like a Jack-in-a-box.

His voice was so vigorous that everybody laughed.

"Didn't yer hear?" grinned Nick. "She says yer dyin's too thin—yer kin scratch yer ear an' trot!"

"Begorra, I'm found out!" whispered the old scamp, who had shammed sickness in order to entrap Josie into marrying him; saying which he leaned back upon the pillow and chuckled.

"Oh, yer didn't fool Nick," growled Extree.

"Mulligan," sternly observed the judge, "you have behaved shamefully to this young lady."

"I thought you were dying," said Josie, indignantly. "You are a bad old man to pretend such an awful thing;" then addressing her lover, pleaded: "Extree, take me away."

"Not before dis ole sinner has pologized," snapped Nick.

Mulligan half rose in the bed, and, turning his sly old wizened face toward her, said, in a soft, persuasive voice:

"Sure an' didn't I do it all fur love; and does the purty colleen ax me to say anything in order to explain *that*?" adding: "Wait awhile, me darlin', when I really scratch me ear an' trot, as ye've tould me to do so swately, maybe ye'll find I loved ye better thin ye thought;" then kissing his hand to her, fell back, and ejaculated: "Tim Brady, I'd like a drap ov the crayter. Begorra, that newsboy has sowld me."

The lawyer and the judge accompanied Josie and her friends to the door, explaining that they had no idea the old man was shamming, and complimented the girl upon her refusal of his offer.

Joe, who seemed astonished that they were not followed by a gang of rowdies, took a back seat, and, as they settled themselves, said:

"Is der old dodger dead?"

"No," grinned Extree, starting the horse; "der performance is *post-poney-ed*."

CHAPTER XXV.

PIPING AN ORGANIST.

"MARK my words," said Mrs. Rudolph, as Nick pulled up at the first ice-cream saloon on the road, "Josie, something will come of this."

"One thing will," merrily replied the girl, who had recovered her usual good spirits.

"What is that?" smilingly demanded Extree, ordering "cream for four."

"I'll never believe that horrid old man again," she said.

"I thought dere was goin' ter be a muss, observed Joe, pitching in at the plate of cream that the waiter set before him. "Say, do der doctors tink der old rooster will recover!"

"Dr. Extree thinks so," laughingly answered Josie, inserting her spoon in her portion of the icy delicacy. "Well, I'm glad it's all over."

They chatted awhile, then paid for their refreshments, and remounting the vehicle, returned towards the city.

"Nick," said Joe as they drove on board the ferry-boat. "Take mother an' Josie to der City Hall Park an' let dem see der fireworks in style."

"Good idea," said our hero, and half an hour afterwards they were drawn up among the crowd waiting for the usual loyal display. Close to them were a gang of rowdies, one of whom was Snell disguised as a workman.

He knew that his late arrest had been caused by Nick, and that the boy was an active, bitter enemy.

Taking his place near the express wagon, he began to think what he could do to revenge himself. It was pitch dark.

After musing awhile Snell took a pair of small plyers from his pocket and proceeded to loosen the axle caps of Nick's vehicle.

Just then a rocket flashed into the air, and the quick eyes of little Joe took in his intention at a glance.

"Nick," he whispered, "a feller is unscrewin' our wheels."

The arrival of some policemen on the spot caused the companions of the ex-detective to move further on, while Snell, not observing this, continued his fiendish work.

"Joe" breathed Extree, "drop down on der oder side an' tell der cops ter grab der cuss!"

He little thought what a haul he was about to make.

His pard did as he was directed, and just as Snell had completed his task, two officers grabbed him and walked him off, Nick and Joe following, while a third policeman kept guard over the wagon.

Luckily, upon arriving at the City Hall, they met one of the Treasury detectives, who recognized Snell and arrested him on the old charge; Extree saying that he did not want to prosecute the man for loosening the caps of the axles.

Borrowing the plyers, which the police had secured, Nick returned to the wagon and re-screwed the caps; then, sending Joe back with the instrument and relieving the officer in charge, he remounted and enjoyed the sight, the fireworks being particularly good.

During one of the pauses, Josie said to him:

"Why did you go away and leave that policeman with us?"

"We've nabbed me noble Snell," he whispered. "He won't git away this pop; they've sacked all the old gang at the Tombs, besides der Treasury officers hev got him."

The next day, the papers announced:

"ARREST OF THE NOTORIOUS SNELL."

GALLANT ACT OF THE POLICE.

THE EX-DETECTIVE IN IRONS."

When Nick stuck this notice up in front of his stand, he winked at Mr. Tom McNally, saying:

"Dey orter put, Gallant act ob Josie our news-gal, who didn't scream or fuss when der arrest was made. Don't yer tink so, boss?"

"Or, better than that," laughed his friend. "Gallant act ob Extree Nick, the newsboy, and of his pard, little Joe Rudolph, who, between them, did all the work of securing the ex-detective."

Nick laughed, saying:

"Oh, we must give der officers a chance sometimes. Der cops are improvin'. Nick has showed 'em der trick."

About eleven o'clock he called at the Treasury office and informed the official how the counterfeiters were working.

"Are you sure that it was Green?" demanded the gentleman.

"Just so sure as I'd know yer by yer hands, boss," quickly replied the newsboy. "Yer've got four teeny warts, in a cluster, on yer right hand, an' der little finger ov yer left has bin broke."

"You're a regular detective!" exclaimed the other. "I might say you know more than half our officers do."

"Yea, boss," he said, "I oughter; scratchin' roun' New York sellin' papers fur a livin', makes a feller keep his eyes open. I'd back myself agin any ob yer crowd, though I am only a newsboy."

"You have shown yourself smart, honest and diligent," said his friend. "Now, if Snell will not confess, I must trust to you."

"An' Josie an' Joe," smilingly interrupted Nick. "'Scuse me, but yer must give dem a show; dey're real smart, boss."

"Good!" said the gentleman, not minding Nick, stopping his speech. "You, Josie and Joe must put your heads together and follow Green! He must be traced. These counterfeit five cent nickles are giving our merchants great annoyance, as they prevent customers from taking the good ones, and change is scarce. Come here to-morrow, and I will give you some instructions; meanwhile you and Joe keep your eyes open."

As he rose to depart, Extree said with great glee:

"Oh, we've pounded Mr. Budd Ketchum."

"Done what?" smiled the other.

"Hove him inter his aunt's cream ser-loon!" laughingly answered the boy rapidly describing his adventure with Joe and the Ketchum gang.

"We don't want him yet," observed the official.

"He is a mean creature, and my detectives report that he flights clear of the counterfeit business. I think that you served him out well."

"Boss," cried Extree, as he retreated toward the door, "it would hev *charmed* yer ter see dat crowd tryin' ter scramble outer der cream. Mr. noble Budd took us for two strong Irish gals."

Guess he'll drop der biz now," with which he took himself off.

That day nothing particular occurred, and when the evening papers were delivered, Nick sauntered down town, keeping his eyes open for Green.

A little above Grand Street he came across a white-haired old man with a long beard, crouching on the sidewalk, and operating on the same old hand-organ the woman had used.

Nick sauntered carelessly by, whistling, and when he arrived opposite the old man he tossed a cent into the tin cup, when out came the aged one's hand, and Extree saw that it was Green.

"Tort I knowed der old masheen," he murmured, as he moved off.

Taking up a position in a neighboring doorway, he rapped on the panel, although a notice on it showed that the place was "To be Let," then kept his eye on the organist.

After awhile, a number of persons, among whom were two car conductors, went to the "grinder" for change, or rather to purchase the counterfeit, and about seven o'clock he had evidently sold out.

When he thought that the coast was clear, Green shouldered his organ, and moved slowly toward the Jersey City Ferry.

The newsboy allowed him to get out of sight, after which, emerging from his place of concealment, he darted across town, arriving at the ferry a long time before the organist.

"Me noble Mr. Green," he murmured, "I've got yer dis time. Yer kean't fool Nick!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SKEETERS GO FOR EXTREE.

"YER a awful artful cuss," mused our hero, as Green trudged feebly into the ferry house.

The boy, who knew that he must "lie low," had ensconced himself behind some German emigrants, who were clustered in the center of the waiting room, and was as safe as a bank.

The ancient-looking organist slunk into a corner, and when the boat arrived, hurried aboard, followed by Nick.

Upon reaching the Jersey side, Green shambled off at a rapid pace, and presently entered a car bound for Elizabeth.

"Boardin' in der country for der summer," thought the boy. "Well, me noble Green, I'll get yer a permanent hash-mill afore I've done wid yer," with which he bought a ticket and cautiously worked through the train, spying his man in the foremost car busily purchasing an evening paper.

As the newsboy, who had sold him the sheet, moved on, Nick winked at him to step into the next car, which was empty.

"Why, how d'yer do, Extree?" exclaimed the lad, who knew him. "Goin' out to git yer skin tickled for de season?"

"Many 'skeeters out here?" laughed Nick.

"Many?" derisively returned his acquaintance. "Gol dern 'em, dey jes' taps yer as a bar-tender does a fresh keg of lager. Drives in deir faucets an' sets yer runnin'! Many 'skeeters? Why, out where I lives, der's solid blocks of 'em."

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot!" laughingly observed our boy; "yer kean't play dat on me! Yer don't fool Nick dat way."

"Where yer gwine?" once more inquired the news-vender.

"Yer sold a paper ter a old rooster wid a organ, jes' now," said Extree, in a low tone.

His chum nodded, saying:

"He's one ov a crowd as travels on dis line a good deal; dey allus carries dat old mewsecal fakemint wid 'em. Yer don't know him, do yer, Nick?"

"Why?" asked our boy.

"Well, der gang he belongs ter, ain't on der square!" winked his friend.

"No?" said Extree.

"No," murmured the other; then noticing that another boat had arrived, added: "we're off now. I'll run through der train an' come back to yer arter we get well started."

Rising, Nick re-entered the car containing the organist, and watched his movements.

Presently a healthy looking youth, with a voice like an echo, came through the train, bleating:

"Popcorn!"

The old man, or rather Green, bought twenty-five cents worth, and paid him in counterfeit nickels.

A boy with strawberries next entered, and of him the old fellow purchased six boxes, paying him in the same "stuff."

Just then the news agent, Nick's friend, arrived on the scene and was about to say something to the fruit-vender, when Extree motioned him out of the car, whispering:

"D'yer know dat boy?"

"He's me brother," answered the other. "I ain't goin' ter 'low dat old fraud ter shove der queer on tar him."

"Hush!" said Nick. "Let him mark der nickels an' keep dem; here's der dollar an' a half. I'm pipin' der old 'un."

"Yer ain't a detective, are yer?" demanded his friend.

"No," grinned our hero. "I'm a derved sight smarter den a cop! I'm Extree Nick, der New York newsboy."

The conductor shouted "all aboard," so the news agent rushed away, and hurriedly informed his brother what to do.

When the train was well off Nick's friend sought him, saying:

"Come inter der baggage ker."

Watching until the ex-detective was looking out of the window, Extree slipped by him and was presently helping his friend fold and sort papers.

"Dem five-cent nickels looks O. K.," said the news agent, whose name was Gumpier, and who was known in the profession as Gum. "He used to shove bright money, but now, if what he's given Sam is queer, it's just like any other ter look at!"

"Told yer brother ter mark 'em?" inquired Nick.

"Yea," nodded Gum. "Told him ter put E. N. on each."

"Yer know der old rooster, do yer?" said Extree.

"Yea," replied the boy. "What yer up ter, Nick? Can't yer tell a fellow, hey?"

Extree briefly recounted how he had been hunted down by Jonas Tover and accused of burglary, tried, re-tried, and acquitted, and now he had vowed never to set foot in his news-stand until he had brought his defamers to justice; his burning, graphic story moving his friend and causing the latter, from time to time, to ejaculate:

"Dern 'em! Bully fur Josie! Bully fur Joe! Yer fixed 'em! Darned funny!" and to otherwise express his approbation of the narrative.

Nick was often interrupted in his recital, as Gum had to deliver papers to the wayside newsboys.

"Now, will you help me?" he demanded, as they neared Elizabeth.

"Will I help yer?" answered Gum. "Yer bet I will, Extree! Didn't I go ter yer farder's funeral? Ay course I'll help yer! Here's Elizabeth; der ole rooster gits off here."

By that time it was quite dusk, so Nick was enabled to follow the old man, without attracting his notice.

As the cars thundered away from the depot, a very aged-looking woman joined Green and the two went shopping together.

"Another stall!" muttered Extree. "I wonder who de other ole duck is? She's got der same togs on as me noble Green wore yesterday!"

The pair moved about Elizabeth City, purchasing various supplies, far more than two persons could eat, the old woman stowing them with the boxes of berries in a big market-basket.

"Dis is gittin' excitin'?" murmured our hero, as they selected and paid for six pounds of tender-loin steak.

"Dey must keep a boardin'-house!"

Strangely enough the crone never spoke, but would poke at her purchases, and nod to Green, who did all the talking.

After roaming about until they reached the outskirts of the city, they proceeded to a low rum-mill, and, entering a stable in the rear, deposited the organ and their purchases in a dilapidated buggy, then procuring a jug of whisky, mounted into the trap, started the old horse, and retracing their route, drove across the railway track towards Newark.

Extree was a good runner, so, tightening his belt, he trotted off after the pair, and the night being starlit, succeeded in keeping them in view.

Past elegant villa-residences, a neat church, more villas, many of them brilliantly lighted, and by a number of partly finished buildings, then to the right, turning down a by-road and recrossing the railroad track, drove Green and his friend, little thinking that Nick was padding it after them.

As they advanced the road became more wretched, and at length they paused, let down some bars, and entered a private way, winding in and out among a swampy track swarming with mosquitos.

Extree had heretofore encountered only a few of those lively insects—the skirmishers of the main army of New Jersey that was lurking in the swamps; now he was face to face with the entire swarm.

They were in heavy clouds, and in five minutes his face was so swollen that he could scarcely see, while Green and the old woman were cursing and driving like maniacs.

Kneeling, Nick scooped up some of the damp, peaty earth and slapped it upon his face and neck,

then rose to follow, but, in his agony, took the wrong road and fell headlong into a pond.

After swimming for a while, with a halo of mosquitos hovering about him, he crawled out, saying: "If dis yer's bein' a detective—give me der extree biz!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

JOSIE'S TROUBLES.

"EIGHT, nine, ten, eleven," said Joe, as he turned over on his bed. "I'll see ef Extree has got home."

Then, rising, he entered Nick's room.

The moon was shining in at the window, revealing an empty bed.

Just then some one in the living apartment coughed.

It was Josie.

"Extree in dere?" inquired Joe.

"No," sobbed the girl. "I've been dreaming all sorts of things about him; he hasn't returned."

The boy slipped on his clothes, and joining her, said:

"Don't yer take on, Josie; he's gone arter dem fellers."

"He'll get killed," she said, in a sorrowful tone.

"I wish he'd drop hunting after counterfeiters; it's work for men, not boys."

"Peugh!" snorted Joe, who was hurt by her remark. "That's all yer know about it, Josie. Der men kean't hold a candle ter our Nick; besides, ain't he a manly feller, hey?"

"And you," she half-laughingly retorted, "you're as bad as he is. Poor Extree. I dreamed that he was lying dead, killed by that horrid, shocking, shameful, dreadful old wretch, Uncle Jonas Tover."

Joe chuckled, saying:

"You know dreams allus goes by contraries; more likely Jonas has got his little 'count settled; don't yer worry 'bout Extree."

"But I do, I must, I will!" she vehemently replied. "You don't care for him as I do. He isn't much to you. If he's dead you'll only feel sorry; it will kill me."

"Josie," he reproachfully answered, "yer know yer don't mean dat; I'd die fur Nick."

"Oh, Joe," she cried, giving him a kiss, "forgive me. I know you think the world of him."

"Der world," murmured the newsboy. "I tink more of him den I do of *two worlds*. What should we do widout Extree?"

"Joe," she pleaded, "I'm half crazy with anxiety; you'll forgive me, won't you, when I ask you to help me persuade him to give this business up?"

"What!" cried the boy, "arx Extree Nick ter go back on hisself? Josie, it kean't be did."

"But they will kill him," she sobbed.

"Look here, Josie," he softly replied. "I knows yer feel bad—'cos yer mashed on Nick—but—"

Here she rose and indignantly observed:

"Me mashed—you know better, Joseph Rudolph."

The newsboy smiled and then continued:

"I mean ter say, *Extree's dead gone mashed on yer*, Miss Perry; yer don't think I'd insinuate yer was makin' up ter him, do yer?"

Spite of her sorrow, Josie was obliged to laugh.

"Come, you young folks, it's time you stopped talking," said Mrs. Rudolph. "Josie, you go back to bed. Extree will be back in time to get his morning papers, and you, Joe, turn in directly."

"All right, mother," he dutifully answered, adding in a low tone to the troubled girl, "Now you just go an' take some sleep; if yer don't I'll tell Extree dat yer waited up fur him."

Five o'clock the next morning arrived, but no Nick came, and Josie's red eyes showed that she had passed a sleepless night.

"Don't worry," said Joe, as he assisted her to open the stand. "I'll go up town an' serve der route;" then as he ran along Broadway, he thought, "Oh, she ain't mashed on him, av course not."

When he returned, Josie darted round to her lodgings to see if Extree had got back, but Mrs. Rudolph only shook her head at her, saying:

"No signs of the scamp!"

Upon reaching the stand, she beheld a sight that made her flush and tremble.

There stood, or rather tried to stand, her father, addressing, or attempting to address, Mr. Tom, while little Joe was biting his lips with vexation, and endeavoring to stop the old man's driveling story.

Ever since the day that the girl began to earn wages she had done her best to assist her degraded parents, her only request being:

"Don't come near me."

When she took to tending the stand, she paid their fare to Philadelphia, and every week since,

had remitted them two-thirds of her earnings; but now, against their agreement, they had returned:

"Yesh," maundered her drunken parent, "Josie's me gurl, begorra! She wouldn't take de name av her felle'—hic—she said. She washn't 'shamed—ov—hic—Perry! Understand me, boss? I'm Mish Perry's father!"

The color fled from her face, and her lips trembled.

Just then Mr. Tom noticed her and saw that she was tortured beyond power of speaking.

Stepping quickly forward, she gave him a look full of misery—a look that haunted him for the next hour; then nervously grasping her father by the left wrist, led him away.

"Where's yez felle'?" slobbered the drunken beast. "I want—see—hic—yer felle'?" but she urged him along until they arrived in a quiet cross street, when she turned upon him, saying: "Father!"

"Josie, my—hic—schild!" he began, endeavoring to smile, but she checked him with:

"Father, is this your return for my kindness?"

"Lishen," he said, clawing at her in his drunken playfulness. "I want dollar?"

"Not a cent more will you have from me," she hissed.

"No!" he sneered. "By gosh, I will!" then fell backwards into an empty crate that stood on the sidewalk.

Josie looked at him so scornfully, that, drunk as he was, the flush of shame came to his cheeks, and he began to weep.

Just then two boys came out of the store and made an attempt to overturn the crate and pitch him headlong into the street, when she stayed them, saying:

"He's my father!"

"He's drunk," observed one of the boys.

"Shall we send for a cop?"

"No," she answered. "Help him out and let him go. Your fathers might some day be as he is."

"Mine very often gets so," said the other lad, taking Perry by the arm.

At that moment an expressman, whom Josie knew, passed with his wagon, and, seeing her in trouble, inquired if he could help her.

"Yes," she nodded, biting her pretty lips until the blood came; "will you take him," pointing to the drunken man, swaying between the boys, "home?" then giving the expressman an address, she turned away, her face and neck crimsoned with shame.

"Yer derved loafer," she heard the man say, "for two pins I'd cart yer down to a pier and dump yer inter a dirt barge. Yer don't deserve such a child as Josie."

For some time the poor girl walked aimlessly up and down Broadway, scarcely knowing what she was about.

"Oh," she moaned, "what have I done that they should treat me so? I have given them all I had to spare, every cent, and done all I could to help them, and kept it from Extree, who thinks I have a little of something saved up against sickness. Why did father come and disgrace me in Mr. Tom's eyes? God help me; all my trouble comes at once."

After a while she returned to the stand, and taking her usual place, said to her companion: "Joe, run round and see if Extree has returned."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOY AND SORROW.

WHEN little Joe had vanished, Mr. Tom came out of the office and, handing Josie a note, passed down Broadway.

It was such a novel thing for him to do, that the girl blushed and hesitated to open it, and, as some customers came along just then, she laid the communication aside, and did her best to sell the new arrivals a bill of books.

Since the formation of the firm of Extree, Josie and Joe, she had enlarged their stock, adding popular books and stationary, and, as she was clever and obliging, had quite a number of good customers.

After wrapping up the articles selected, she gave the folks their change, and was about to take up Mr. Tom's epistle, when Joe entered, all out of breath, saying:

"Extree's come back wid a head on him!"

"How?" she demanded, for he seemed as though guying her. "What do you mean? Is he safe?"

"He's swelled up like a be-loon," panted Joe. "I tell yer, Josie, yer won't know him; he's got a head on him like a prize pumpkin, same as yer sees in der restaurang winders."

Thrusting the note into her bosom, she quitted the stand, and ran every step of the way to Mrs. Rudolph's; then entering the living room, cried:

"Extree, Extree, where are you?" when a hideously distorted figure, seated in a chair with his head swathed in wet cloths, attempted a cheer, but failing, on account of swollen features, mumbled:

"Yum, yum, Jo-the."

For some moments the girl gazed upon him with horror depicted on every feature of her pretty face, then, nearing him, pityingly said:

"Good gracious me, are you my Extree?"

"Yum, yum," replied the boy, holding out a hand that looked like a boxing-glove.

At that instant Mrs. Rudolph entered, and seeing Josie, said:

"Ain't he in a state?"

The girl shed tears, not because she was soft, but out of love for the sufferer.

"Yum, yum, Jo-the," said Nick, meaning, "don't cry, Josie."

"Poor Extree," she said.

"Oh, he'll soon be better," observed Mrs. Rudolph. "Now you go and lie down for awhile, Josie. The doctor says that this stuff—sedative water, he calls it—will reduce the swelling in no time."

The girl retired to her own room, thanked Heaven for sparing her lover's life, and throwing herself, on the bed, fell fast asleep.

When she awoke it was growing dusk, and she could hear Extree in the next room whistling.

"He's better, anyhow," she thought.

Hastily making her toilet, she went to him, and found him as lively as a lark, and almost recovered.

"Hello, Josie," he cried; "sorry yer was scared, but I couldn't git back afore."

"You've been in a dreadful state," she said.

"How is your mouth?"

"I've bin in der State of New Jersey," he saucily replied. "It's a nice enough State, only der 'skeeters are over-populatin' it," then drawing near her, added, "an' as for me mouf, it only wants wan ting ter fix it better'n ever."

"What's that?" she innocently asked.

"Fur yer jes' ter lay yer lips on it," he said, giving her a hearty kiss.

He very seldom thus offended, so Josie forgave him and returned his tribute, saying:

"There, take it back."

As she withdrew from his arms, the note handed to her by Mr. Tom fell to the floor, and Extree spying it, observed:

"Yer've dropped a love-letter."

Flushing with mingled pride and sorrow, for the sight of the epistle reminded her of her shame, she said:

"I have not read it, Extree. It's from Mr. Tom. You read it."

"Mr. Tom send yer billy-dews?" he laughingly asked. "I must inquire into dis."

"Extree," she said, bending her pretty face, "my father came to the office to-day."

"Tight?" he murmured.

"Yes," she answered, blushing like a red rose. "Oh, Extree, you will never take to drink, will you?"

"Not while yer takes ter me," he quietly replied, opening the envelope. "Never mind, my dear, yer've done yer duty to yer old man."

"That I have," she softly returned, watching him.

While Nick perused Mr. Tom's letter, his lips trembled and his chest heaved with emotion.

When he had read every word, he said:

"God bless him! he's a bully man," then handed the note to her.

After reading it, Josie wiped her eyes, saying: "Extree, I love and respect Mr. Tom, just as I would like to love and respect my father;" after which she read the communication aloud, as follows:

"DEAR MISS PERRY—Pray do not imagine that the sad scene to which you were just now subjected will make any difference in the high esteem I have for you! Extree has told me of your noble conduct to your parents. Remember I am always
Your friend,
"Tom McNALLY."

"How did der old man carry on?" asked Nick.

"As usual," sighed the poor girl.

"Mr. Tom is white, ain't he?" said Extree. "I tell yer he's bin a true friend ter us right clean through the piece. He treats poor folks jes' as he does rich ones."

"Yes," said Josie, nodding her head. "He doesn't despise me because he has seen—my—father."

"What yer mean ter do wid der old folks?" demanded Nick. "Josie, yer must shake 'em!"

"Never!" she fervently replied. "I'll try to change their habits. I can't abandon them; they're my father and mother, Extree."

"That's so," he mused. "Josie, yer'll pull outer dis all right."

"Come, Extree," she said, "tell me how you

came to stay away all night? You alarmed me dreadfully."

"Well, yer see," he laughingly began, "I met a chum ov mine on der train—Gum, we calls him—fur I'd tracked me noble Green as far as der Jersey City railway. Gum will help me wid dis yer biz. Well, Green got off der train at Elizabeth, and jined Lot's wife, or an old critter who looked like her."

"Are you sure that she was a woman," interposed Josie. "I begin to doubt everybody. Perhaps it was Tover."

"Right yer are," he cried, as though he had hit upon a trail. "Dat ole woman was me noble Uncle Jonas, dern him! 'Scuse me, Josie. I tort I knowed his voice. He never spoke until dey drove inter der crowd ob skeeters. I tort me knowed me noble's voice."

While he was describing his adventures, and how he had spent the night wandering in the Jersey marshes, Mrs. Rudolph hurriedly entered.

She had been taking charge of the store while Joe delivered the evening papers.

"Josie," she said, "don't be frightened, my dear, yet prepare yourself for some awful news."

The girl trembled, saying:

"Tell me, has anything occurred to my father?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE END OF A SORROW THE BEGINNING OF A JOY.

"YOUR father has met with a bad accident," nervously replied Mrs. Rudolph. "Extree, take Josie to the New York Hospital. Mr. Perry wants to see her at once."

It was a hot, murky night, and the streets were like ovens; spite of which the girl and boy ran most of the way to the hospital, and neither of them spoke a word.

Presently they arrived at the grand entrance, and, upon informing the porter who they were, succeeded in obtaining admittance.

"This way," said the head nurse of the ward to which they had been directed. "I am glad that you have come," then led to a bed upon which reclined a man covered with a sheet that in places was ruddy with blood.

As they approached, an attendant whispered:

"You are just in time; he is sinking rapidly," after which she administered a stimulant to the sufferer.

Perry's eyes were glazed and he could not see, but he knew his girl's voice.

"Josie," he murmured, stretching forth a maimed hand and endeavoring to feel for her. "Josie."

"Here is your Josie, father," she said, bending over him, and kissing his white lips. "Cheer up! you will get well, and—" here she paused, and was unable to end her speech.

Faintly, for he was almost exhausted, the poor fellow whispered:

"Josie, can you forgive me?"

"A thousand times," she passionately replied, raising his head upon her left arm. "Oh! father, look at me;" but Perry was unable to do more than press her hand.

In a few moments he sighed and died.

The nurses withdrew, leaving Josie and the boy with the dead.

It was now Extree's turn to comfort her.

When she had prayed by her father, and crossed his hands upon his bosom, she covered the face with her handkerchief, then retired with her companion.

Her tears had ceased to flow, but her heart was full of sorrow.

After arranging for removing the body, she and Extree left the hospital, and proceeded to the lodging of her mother.

Mrs. Perry, who had witnessed the accident, was indulging in "a drop" in order to drown her sorrow; a number of friends and neighbors joining and assisting her in disposing of the liquid.

Josie arrived just as they had almost emptied one jug, and were endeavoring to induce Mrs. Perry to "sind fur another drap."

The girl overheard the request, and, entering the room, cried:

"Not another sup! Do you know that my father is dead?"

"Dead!" shouted Mrs. Perry, throwing herself upon the bed and going off into hysterics; while the half-intoxicated crowd began to howl like a pack of she-wolves.

"Extree!" said Josie, "clear them out of this."

In two minutes the yawping women were streaming down-stairs, and the boy and girl were alone with the widow.

Josie was true grit, and the death of her father had changed her into woman.

She had a duty to perform, and meant to do it. "Extree," she quietly observed, "draw me a bucket of cold water."

Our hero knew that she was terribly in earnest, so did not pause to ask any questions, but after hunting up the required article, filled it at the hydrant.

"Now you go outside and wait!" she said, and away he went.

Taking a dipper, she filled it with the cold fluid and dashed its contents over her mother; the shock causing the latter to come to her senses, and to gasp:

"Jo-Jo-Jo-sie, what's the matter?" but the girl did not reply, and bailed away as though extinguishing a fire; drenching her parent to the skin, and soon rendering her more sober than she had been in several years; while Extree, who overheard the circus, could scarcely restrain from laughing.

"My good gracious!" at length ejaculated Mrs. Perry, "Jo-Jo-Jo-Josie?"

"Well, mother?" responded the plucky girl.

"Be me sowl but I'm kilt!" shivered the damp woman. "I shall git me death a-cawld."

"Where's the black alpaca dress I sent you?" demanded her daughter.

"Sure an' it's not a 'pakker driss yez'll be after axin' me fur, wid yez father lyin' did, me child," said Mrs. Perry. "It's a black day fur me; he came home an' bate me, an' when I tried to escape he fell ober the banisters av the stairs, and got smashed."

"Mother," quietly interposed Josie, "give me the tickets for your clothes. I know where your garments are; they're pawned."

"Faix ye're smart, Josie," said her parent. "De tickets are in the old taypot in de cupboard."

"Mother," observed de girl, emptying the last drain of whisky into the sink, "Extree will stay here to keep those women away from you."

"Sure, Josie darlin', an' yez wouldn't exhibit me to yer felly as I am," adding aside, "och, she's spilt de swate drap into de drain."

"No," answered her daughter, going to the cupboard and shaking the pawn tickets out of the teapot. "We'll remain outside. When Extree sees you again you'll be fit to look at;" then, taking the vouchers, she went out of the door, locked it, and handed the key to Nick, saying: "I shan't be very long."

"Josie," he hurriedly whispered, "yer must le'me order the funeral. 'Taint no kinder biz fur yer, Josie."

"Very well," she answered, and in another instant was gone.

When the sound of her voice had ceased, her mother knocked at the door, whispering:

"Extree."

"Hello!" he cried.

"Extree, darlin'," she said, "won't yez stíp down to Mrs. McShane's an' ax her to sînd me just a drap of whisky? I am dyin' of cawld."

Nick grinned, saying:

"It can't be did, *nohow*, Miss Perry."

"Sure, Nick, darlin', jest a tayspoonful," she whined, endeavoring to imitate a shiver. "Boo-oo, I'm so cawld!" but all in vain; whereupon she tried bullying, saying: "Yer a nice, swate felly fur a son-in-law! I shan't give me consint to me gal havin' the likes av yez, there how!" whereupon Extree placed his mouth to the key-hole, and whispered:

"Miss Perry, d'yer know what yer kin do?"

"What, ye mane little purp?" she snapped, for she was real mad with him.

Her ear was closely pressed to the opposite side of the key-hole, so Nick breathed softly into it:

"Yer kin scratch yer ear an' trot, marm. Yer kean't fool Nick! If yer was more like yer daughter it would be der greater ter yer credit." Hearing which she retired.

After awhile Josie returned, and, taking the key from the boy, entered the room, where she assisted her mother to dress, attending her as kindly and lovingly as though she had been the best parent in the world, and combing the woman's frowsy hair until it looked quite handsome.

When she was ready, the poor girl said:

"Mother, I am going to take you home—to Mrs. Rudolph's. Will you promise, *until I ask you to do it*, never to drink another drop of intoxicating liquor? It is for your own good that I say this."

"Shure," began her parent; but Josie stopped her with:

"Mother, for my sake?"

"I'll thry," she answered.

"Say I will," urged her daughter. "Let this black day be the last on which you will sin. Mother, if you don't do this, you will break my heart."

"I promise," firmly replied the woman.

"Josie, you are an angel!"

The brave girl kissed her; then, opening the door, said to the awed boy:

"Extree, my mother."

Nick took Mrs. Perry's hand, and, shaking it, murmured:

"I'm proud ter know yer, marm."

From that hour the woman abandoned her evil course; Josie's devotion had overcome her mother's weakness.

CHAPTER XXX.

PUDD WANTS NICK TO DO THE TRICK.

EXTREE and Josie buried Perry, and the firm subscribed to set Mrs. P. up with a fruit-stall, which she placed on the corner of Broadway and the side street, in sight of the news-stand.

When the funeral was over, Nick went down to the Treasury office and reported his adventures in New Jersey.

"Very good, so far," said the official. "Now you follow them up—we have plenty of proof with which to convict Green; now can't you catch Jonas Tover passing bad money?"

"He's such a sly old duck," grinned the boy.

"He's like a skeeter—yer put yer finger on him an' he ain't dere."

"Well, you talk it over with your partners," remarked the gentleman. "I guess you will hit upon some plan."

"I'll try," answered the boy, after which he took his leave.

One afternoon, when he was delivering papers up-town, he spied Budd Ketchum, dressed in the latest fashion, escorting a woman old enough to be his mother.

As he passed them, Budd withdrew his arm from his companion, and, motioning Nick that he required a paper, whispered:

"Wait for me round the corner—hear?"

"Yea," smilingly observed Extree, adding, in an undertone: "Who hev yer bin robbin' now—hey?"

"*Scsch*, she's my wife," winked the sneak, then passed on.

"Budd's made a strike," mused the boy.

"Well, dern him, he'd do anything fur money."

In a short time the object of his thoughts came prancing round the corner, and motioning Nick to follow, led the way to a neighboring cigar store on the corner of Third avenue, at the rear of which was a private bar.

When they were seated Budd demanded:

"What'll yer suck?"

"A leminade," answered Nick, adding: "Dey don't keep histe cream here, hey?"

"Smoke?" inquired Ketchum, pretending not to hear the last remark.

Extree shook his head, saying:

"I ain't got der asthma."

"Gin cock-tail—extra size; Havana cigar, one lemonade," said Budd, to the waiter, adding:

"and hurry, young fellow, as I have ter take me wife to the theater."

The man procured the order, and Budd gave him a quarter for himself, after which the ex-thief, turning to Nick, said:

"Yer see I kin do it ter rights?"

"What yer want wid me?" inquired our hero, who was leading him on in order to fix him.

"Well, yer see," began Budd, dropping his fine talk, "I've married a rich old woman, an' have got a lot of money."

"Counterfeit?" grinned our hero.

"Oh, no!" laughed Budd. "It's O.K! Now I want yer ter do a job fur me!"

"Dress up as a gal, an' give yer another blessed licking?" sassily inquired Extree.

"Yer fooled us dat time!" growled Budd.

"Mother's never bin herself since?"

Nick chuckled, saying:

"Yer don't tell me? Didn't our histe cream suit her?"

"Oh, stow it!" snarled Budd. "Yer had us that deal! Look here, I want yer ter fix a feller fur me! If yer do it ter rights, I'll pay yer a hundred dollars—a whole hundred dollars, there!"

Wishing to draw him out, Extree said:

"Yer don't say! What's der biz?"

"Ter fix Uncle Jonas Tover!" whispered the sneak. "Yer see, he used me in der burglary biz, an' since, in a counterfeit biz, ter carry money from New Jersey ter a house up-town, an' he's never paid me! Dat's why I had ter rob dem gals! Savey? He promised me five hundred dollars—a couple of hundred ter fix yer, der same fur tryin' ter fix yer pard, an' a hundred fur two weeks work fetchin' counterfeit nickles from Hermann's over here! Der cuss never give me a cent of good money, all I got bein' about seventy-five dollars worth of stuff! I sold it fur twenty because I was afraid ter pass it!"

"Guess yer was too honest," sassed Extree.

"Bless yer, no. I've passed lots ov it, but

dey've found me out so often dat I kean't risk it now.

"Ever got caught?" said Nick.

"Yea," answered Budd. "Dat's why I left Philadelphia. Say, will yer smash old Uncle Jonas for me?"

"What harm's he done me?" demanded the newsboy.

"Don't yer know?" answered Budd. "Listen. When yer started der news-stand he swore he'd bust yer; savvy? Well, findin' yer was on der square, he sent fur me. I was in fur a little job in Philadelphia, an' he got me out. I buzzed round yer, an' smelt out der plan fur der burglary, den made up ter yer an' drewed yer up town, when der boys fixed der job. Understand?"

"Yea," said Nick, as pleasantly as though it were all a good joke. "I con-teever. Shoot ahead."

"Well," grinned Budd, thinking that Extree was taking it all in for gospel, "I did all Uncle Jonas' dirty work, an' he-he-he. I half killed yer pard."

"Yea," smilingly observed our hero, "but yer needn't gas ober dat, Budd; we got square wid yer der night we treated yer ter histe cream."

"By thunder, yer did—yer histed us awful," growled the sneak. "Mother an' I used a quart of *odee-kologne* afore we smelt sweet agin."

"An' den yer wasn't a couple of nose-gays," chuckled Extree. "Well, proceed wid yer moos-ic."

"Yer ain't mad 'bout what I did ter yer, air-yer?" cried Budd, puffing at his cigar.

Nick wasn't simple enough to show his hand on such a bluff, so he sucked at his lemonade and winking, said:

"I pounded yer for what yer did ter me pard. D'yer tink I look like a feller as feels mad when he gets a histe?"

"Bully fur yer," cried Budd. "Shake hands. Yer owe all yer trouble ter that derved old sneak, Uncle Jonas Tover. Yer *fact* go fer him, same's yer did fur me, an' I'm y' r friend fur life."

"I con-teever," nodded Nick, thinking, "I'll fix yer Mr. Budd."

"I've got the fool," thought Budd; then whispering in Extree's ear, said:

"If yer kill him, I shan't cave. Lame him; do anything. Fix him to-night—savvey."

"I con-teever," winked Nick.

"Wat der blazes is con-teever?" demanded the sneak, puffing at his cigar. "Yer ain't guyin' of me, are yer?"

"Con-teever means, I savvy. I tumbles ter yer," laughingly explained Nick, adding: "yer wants some more histe cream?"

"Oh, stow it!" snarled the other, "histe cream—by der hookey if yer'll only histe old Jonas as high, I'll make it a hundred an' fifty dollars!"

"Yer liberal!" said Extree, who was bursting to find out where Hermann lived. "Say—Uncle Tover ain't round New York now?"

"I know it!" nodded Budd. "Uncle Tover is living over in New Jersey, at Hermann's place!"

"New Jersey?" murmured Nick. "Den yer orter put on an extree fifty fur der merskeeters!"

"Oh—pshaw!" sneered the other. "Dere ain't no 'skeeters roun' Hermann's."

"Yer don't say?" ejaculated the newsboy—who knew better. "I want ter know—no merskeeters—den it must be a dreadful unhealthy place, fur all der healthy spots in Jersey are ram-jam full ob buzzers! Well, where is Hermann's?"

Budd raised his head as he spoke, then said in an alarmed tone:

"*Sch—scsch!* I kin hear Piper's voice; he's in the cigar-store! Come here to-morrow—noon!—Excuse me!" with which, after paying for the refreshments, he vanished through the rear door.

In another instant, Piper, disguised as a fruit-peddler, entered the back room, and, approaching the bar, said:

"Berbern sour!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

PIPING A PIPER.

PIPER's disguise was well calculated to deceive a casual observer, as his beard, about three parts grown, was dirty and twisted hither and thither, added to which he wore a green patch over his right eye, and was about half-seas over.

Rising, Extree silently quitted the place and walked briskly for a block, then paused and began to loiter.

After awhile Piper emerged from his shelter, and Nick soon saw that he was on the same errand as Green, viz.: while pretending to sell fruit, he was really disposing of counterfeit coin.

"I'll nab him wid his hands full!" thought the newsboy, and in another minute he was on his way to a neighboring police-station, where, luckily, he encountered an officer who knew him.

"Come along," he excitedly said. "We shall

catch der frog on der hop! Come, a pair ov yer, an' I'll jes plant yer right on ter him!"

"You go up and engage him in conversation; buy some of his fruit, and we'll approach him on both sides," said the officer.

Extree sauntered along the avenue, and presently overtook Piper, who was in the act of selling two dollars' worth of nickel to the barman of a lager beer saloon.

"I've got plenty more," whispered the peddler. "Take five dollars' worth;" but the man, noticing Nick, only shook his head and retired.

"What's der price of yer apples, boss?" said our hero, looking as innocent as a baby.

"Five cents," snuffled Piper, who now recognized the newsboy.

"Yer up in yer prices fur dese hard times," sassed Extree. "Say," glancing around and seeing the officers drawing near, "got any—nickels ter-day?"

"How d'yer know I sells 'em?" nervously demanded the ex-detective; whereupon the boy replied:

"Oh, yer kean't fool Nick; I've been on yer track some time."

Just then the officers collared Piper, and a crowd began to collect.

"Leave the old man alone!" shouted one.

"Shame!" cried a woman. "What has the old boy done?"

The policemen laughed, and after handcuffing Piper, proceeded to examine the contents of his basket.

In a cunning little hole, covered with a lid, were over twenty dollars' worth of counterfeit five-cent pieces.

"That will do, Piper," said one of the officers. "It's no good playing the innocent."

"Run him in!" cried the crowd, who, now that they knew he was a counterfeiter, showed a tendency to assault him. "Run him in, durn him! He's the cuss who has circulated all them bad five-cent nickels."

Extree had a few papers left, so he shouted:

"Yar! here yar—full 'count ob de 'rest!" which smartness so tickled the audience that they bought him out.

"Do you know the prisoner?" inquired one of his customers, as the officers ran Piper into the station-house.

"Der I know der rooster?" grinned our hero. "Yer bet I do; he's one ob der crowd who tried ter give me away. I swore I'd bust him, and I'll keep me word!"

"Are you Extree Nick, the Newsboy?" demanded the man.

"Yer've said it," smilingly replied the boy. "I'm der chap dey wanted ter make out as a thief; but three friends ov mine stuck ter me through thick and thin, an' Jedge Hackett he saw tro' der game, an' 'quitted me. I tell yer he's a bully man, dat jedge. Ses he ter me, Nick, he ses, yer leave der court a innercent boy, an' if I can help yer, he ses, I will. Boss, I've bin a fol-lerin' of dem dertectives an' scoopin' 'em in ever since. *This makes two of 'em.*"

"Well done!" said the customer, handing him a dollar.

"Three cheers fur Extree Nick!" shouted a bootblack in the crowd; "three cheers for Extree—he's fixed anudder of der snoozers wot tried ter give him away," whereupon they gave him three times three and a tiger.

When they confronted him with Piper, the latter became mad, and swore that as soon as he got free he'd kill Extree.

"So it's you that gave me away?" he said, turning on Nick.

"Yea," calmly answered the newsboy. "Didn't I tell yer I'd fix yer? I ain't one ob dem chaps as says one ting an' does another. I got ter show der world what a bad lot me enemies were. Oh, yer needn't trouble ter gas so; I've heerd dat afore."

The justice committed the prisoner, and complimented Nick upon his smartness, after which the boy withdrew, and going to the uptown office of one of the papers, told the clerk his story, saying:

"Jest telegraph ter yer folks dat Extree's coming down wid der full perticklers."

"Right you are," said the clerk; and soon Nick was on the street, where he selected a full stage, then climbed alongside the driver.

They rattled down Broadway at a good pace, and upon reaching the office of the *Journal*, he alighted and entered the building, where he was soon directed to the proper department.

"Got der telegram 'bout Piper's arrest?" he asked.

"Yes!" answered the editor. "Are you Extree Nick?"

Our hero nodded, saying:

"Go ahead, mister, I'm der newsboy."

"You're a rightsmart one," smilingly observed

the gentleman, picking up his pen. "Drive ahead, sonny. We'll get out an extra right away!"

The newsboy told his story: Keeping the part about Budd to himself, and when he had ended it, said:

"Guess dat's about all."

"No," laughingly, replied the editor, writing a few words on a scrap of paper. "There is something more to be done," with which he handed him the following note:

NEW YORK,——

Mr.——, Cashier.

Pay Extree Nick for information respecting the arrest of Piper, the ex-detective, five dollars."

J. W. K.

"Five dollars!" ejaculated the delighted boy.

"Isn't that enough?" demanded the other.

"Lots!" cried Extree, and away he rushed to obtain the money.

Before quitting the office he asked:

"How long will it be afore der extree is out?"

"Half an hour," said the clerk; "it's all ready except your news, and some of that is set. We're going to rush it through."

Having been handsomely paid, he did not want to sell the information twice, so he tore up Broadway, never pausing until he reached the newsstand, where sat Josie, looking too sweet for anything.

"Rah!" he cried; "I've fixed me noble Mr. Piper."

"Come in," she said, opening the door. "You're tired out, Extree. I'm so glad you've got him. How did you manage it?"

But he hung back and laughingly replied:

"No, yer don't; not much, Miss Josie. Yer awful nice; but Nick aint goin' ter do that trick."

"Oh, I forgot," she blushing observed. "Extree, when you do come in, you shan't go out again in a hurry."

"Not if yer dere, Josie," he saucily replied.

"Hello, Nick! what's up?" demanded Joe, who had just then arrived from home.

Extree jerked the peak of his cap over his left eye, and striking an attitude, merrily returned:

"Nicked me noble Mr. Piper an' got a *kommishin* to mash Uncle Jonas Tover. Tell yer pard, we're in luck."

Half an hour later the five dollars were invested in extras, and the newsbody were rushing up town, shouting.

"Yar! here yar! extree, full-e-count ob der 'rest ob Piper der counterfeiter! Smart behavior ob Extree Nick, der newsboy!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

SALLY AND CLO.

THE arrest of Piper caused quite a stir at Police Headquarters, and the superintendent swore that if his officers did not ferret out the whole caboodle of counterfeiters, he would break all the sergeants, and let them try their hands at patrol duty.

"You're a nice, smart crowd," he observed to one of the captains; "there's Extree Nick, a newsboy, who has done more, in his spare time, than all your gang put together."

"I know it," answered the captain, "I'm not to blame for it. You can't make reliable officers out of political bummers, and old thieves. You are aware of that. All the while a politician, who joins us to-day, is thought more of than a good man, who has been on the force twenty years. Things must go on anyhow. It isn't my fault that the police protect criminals. You can't expect our men to arrest their old friends?"

"You'll own that this newsboy—Extree, as they call him—is smart?" said the superintendent, "why can't you do what he does?"

"When you clear the force of your political friends, we will free New York of criminals!" quietly returned the captain, "it isn't the old officers who help rascals, like Tover, but your chums."

"I'll have Piper before me!" growled the latter, and presently the counterfeiter stood in his presence, when he bullied him for a while, then said:

"Where's Hermann live?"

"Find out!" snapped the ex-detective. "You haven't got a soft thing in me!"

In vain the official blustered, but the prisoner was firm, saying:

"Set yer boy-detective ter work. Dern him—if I had only let him alone I shouldn't be in this hole."

A few evenings after the day of this arrest two colored girls crossed the harbor by the Jersey City ferry-boat. Budd had not kept his appointment, so Nick and Joe were on the war-path. One was a big wench, calling herself "Sally,"—this was Extree—and the other a small, saucy-

looking nigger-child, who answered to the name of "Clo."

I need scarcely say that the latter was our Joe. Sally wore a green veil, as it hid his blue eyes. Entering the train bound for Elizabeth, the girls stowed themselves in a corner and held their tongues.

Just as the vehicles started, a fruit-woman, bent and trembling as though with age, got aboard their car, and the vehicle being almost full, she settled herself on the end seat near to the boys.

Joe, who was quite a mimic, grinned and whispered to Nick:

"Thally, don' yo' wan' som' apples?"

"Yell," lisped Extree, in true colored-gal style.

"I *thould* like a *new-tun* pippin, Clo, but yo' see I've got no change, chile."

"De lady give yo' de change!"

"I'll change a dollar," said Green—for it was that worthy.

Joe picked out four pippins and tendered a dollar bill, receiving sixteen five-cent pieces, which he tied in the corner of his pocket-handkerchief.

Green dozed, or pretended to do so, until they arrived at Elizabeth, when he woke and followed the lads out of the car.

Standing near the depot was a dilapidated wagon, in which sat the same old woman whom Extree had before seen.

"Ki!" he grinned. "Come 'long yo' Clo—we nebber get dere to-night, if yo' don' move spy; then crossing the railway track they struck along Newark Avenue.

When they were alone, Joe said:

"Was dat duck Jones?"

"Yea," chuckled Nick, "Josie was right! Yer bet we'll fix dem dis pop; I knowed it was Jones by his hands; der second finger ob his left duke is withered."

Presently the wagon containing the disguised men, passed them.

"Where you gals going?" said Green. "Want a ride?" but Sally would not reply, so the rascally pair drove on.

"Oh! scratch yer ear an' trot!" murmured Extree, as the conveyance rolled out of sight.

It was somewhat of a chilly evening in the early fall, so the mosquitoes did not annoy them.

Upon arriving at the place where the road branched, they met a woman tending a cow.

"Lady," said Extree, "have yo' seen two ole women drive by dis ya way?"

"Yes!" she solemnly answered, for she was suffering from fever and ague, and didn't feel good; "what about it?"

"We done go an' gage ourselves to dem!" simpered the scamp; "dey tell us it wa' only a short walk."

"They lie," she angrily returned; "it's three miles from here. I live near their house; there's a regular crowd of them, and my husband has lost money playing old sledge over at their place. You two gals musn't go there."

"What do yo' tink, Sally?" said Joe.

"Lady?" said Extree, in a gentle, colored girl's voice, "we done dar go back to-night; we'll pay yo' fo' supper an' bed?"

"Very good," she replied, "I ain't proud; I don't mind being kind to colored folks; I'll only charge you a dollar each."

"Bress yo', lady," grinned Extree, "yo' kno' beauty only skin deep, lady."

Giving the cow's tether a tug, she started homeward, accompanied by the two girls, to whom she related the following story:

"A year ago, the old farm-house where them women live was bought by a New York gentleman named Tover, who fixed the house and rented it to a German, a real nice man, who couldn't speak English. My husband and he became great friends, and we supplied him with food and washed for him; his clothes were all marked 'H.' He stayed there working on some patent, and was often visited by friends, until about a month ago when he left us. Meanwhile an old lady, sister of Mr. Tover, came, and with her a gang of male and female loafers, and since they arrived here my husband has been drunk all the time."

Nick winked at his companion.

One of the birds had flown.

"I believe that poor H. is in Philadelphia!" continued their guide, "Miss Riddle, Mr. Tover's sister, has been there nearly every day, and my opinion is the poor feller's the victim o' some plot!" then turning to the girls who were laughing and romping, and at the same time listening to every word, and only fooled by way of blinding her, she added, "but there, you colored folks don't care about such things. What pay did they promise you?"

"Five dollars a week fo' de two," giggled Extree. "A-done now, Clo yo's too sassy, yo' is!"

The playful Clo fetched Sally a blow in the ribs and darted across the road, crying:

"Yo, Sal, done no," while the latter turned to the woman, saying:

"Lady, done yo' say where we came from to yo' husband?"

"My husband's gone to Philadelphia fur Miss Biddle," she snapped. "He won't be back to-night. My opinion is they're engaged in some unlawful business."

After turning to the left and crossing the marshes they, about dusk, came to a miserable shanty, which the woman termed a farm-house, and entering the kitchen, seated themselves.

They had to be very careful in handling things as the black composition rubbed off their fingers; but they were equal to the emergency and did not betray themselves.

The woman asked them for the money they had promised her, and Sally gave her the two dollars, after which she regaled them with rye coffee and hot biscuits; then showing them the way to the barn, observed:

"You'll find lots of sweet hay in the loft. Good-night."

Stretching themselves out upon the soft bed, they pulled some of it over them, then fell asleep.

When they awoke the next morning, they re-blacked their faces and hands, and peeping through the windows of the loft, beheld a sight that made them open their eyes and ejaculate:

"My gracious!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

EXTREE, JOSIE AND JOE ON THE TRAIL.

ABOUT an eighth of a mile from the barn was the smoking ruin of what had once been a farm-house, and crowded into the out-buildings were at least twenty persons, among whom were two women.

"Der shebang is busted," murmured Extree. "Dern it, they will slip through our fingers."

"Lie low," said Joe; "dey're coming dis way," and presently the newsboys saw the two old crones moving towards the woman's house.

Abandoning the window, the lads clambered into a rack above the hay-loft and kept quiet.

Presently their hostess entered the barn and called:

"You colored gals?"

Clo gave Sally a dig in the ribs.

"Come, you lazy critters," she shouted, "you've had your dollar's worth out of that hay." But they did not answer her, whereupon she said: "I guess they've gone."

"Can we look at the barn?" they heard Jonas inquire.

"Yea," she replied, "you kin look all you want, but my husband don't let you no barn with my permission."

"Send your boarders to Newark until you've rebuilt your house. Excuse me, sir, I've got some biscuits baking."

In a short time they heard Jonas and Green climbing the ladder, and presently the former said:

"Good big place, hey?"

"Yes," said his companion, sinking upon the hay. "I'm tired. Blame that fire. I tell you dragging that heavy machinery out of the burning building was no joke."

"Never mind; we've saved it, anyhow," urged Jonas, following his example. "If we can hire this place, the boys can dose here, and we can cover the plant with hay, and leave it in our own barn. I must build, anyhow, and can get a decent place put up for three thousand dollars."

"I wonder where Piper has got to," observed Green. "If he had been here the fire would never have occurred. That fool jess went to light the cook-stove with kerosene and up it went."

"I don't care," drowsily murmured Tover; "we saved the machinery. Why, it cost me nigh on four thousand dollars."

"I don't think this five-cent business is worth the trouble," yawned Green. "Set the boys to work on a bank, and collar a lot of the genuine article."

Extree squeezed Joe's arm, and they exchanged winks.

"Say," demanded Jonas, "when you go to the city, don't forget to get a *Herald*."

"You ought to have a newstand out here at Tover-town," sneered Green.

"I want to see what they have done to Snell!" said the old man, gaping. "That infernal young skunk, Extree Nick, sold him."

"Extree don't know me in my disguise!" said Green. "I've seen him several times."

Nick once more pinched Joe, and they winked knowingly at each other.

"All our arms are burnt!" remarked Jonas. "If the cops swooped now we couldn't help ourselves."

"They aint smart enough to track us," an-

swered Green, then turning over he fell fast asleep.

When they were quite sure that the men were well off, the gals crept from their hiding-place and descended to the lower floor, leaving Uncle Jonas and Green snoring like pigs.

Quitting the stable they walked briskly toward the road, leading across the marshes to Elizabeth, arriving at the depot in time for the eight o'clock train.

"We'll fix 'em this time," whispered Extree. "I guess the noble Mr. Budd smelt a mice an' trot. I'd sell him again, but yer see we've done der trick widout his information. Yer should hev beheld him *git* when he heard me noble Piper's voice."

"Yer won't let him go, will yer, Extree?" demanded his pard.

"Not if Nick knows hisself!" replied our hero. "I'll play me noble Mr. Budd as a kit duz a mouse—den scrunch him. Let him go? Not much. Joe, yer an' I've got ter tear up Broadway some day shoutin': Yar, here—yar extree, full e-count ob de capture ob der hull crowd dat tried ter give Extree Nick away; an' yer bet it won't be long afore we do it."

"Yer bet it won't," excitedly replied Joe. "We'll scoop dem dis time."

They were in a quiet corner, so no one overheard them, as the passengers taking the girls for colored, gave them a wide berth.

"Jonas don't know 'bout Piper, yet," said Nick. "He orter get us to supply him wid extrees,"

grinned Joe.

"We'll give him all de extree he wants," chuckled our hero.

"He little tort Extree Nick was listenin' ter his smart plans."

"Green said dat yer didn't know him," laughed Joe. "Wasn't it blamed comical ter hear 'em chinning about yer? Old Jonas called yer a skunk."

"I'll skunk him afore I get thro' wid him," said Extree. "He's a bad lot, an' ought ter be smilin' in a cage."

Upon arriving home they found that Mrs. Rudolph was absent, she having taken charge of the stand while Josie served the paper route.

About ten o'clock the girl came in, and, hearing the boys cleaning up, called:

"Extree, Joe—all right?"

No reply.

"Extree, Joe?" she repeated.

"Josie," merrily observed the latter, "if yer shouts *Sally an' Clo*, yer'll get an answer!" whereupon she pertly exclaimed, "Sally, Clo, you nigger wenches, where are you?"

"Keno!" laughed Nick. "This got us to rights!"

When they were nearly white again, they entered the living room, and Josie told them that the Treasury official had sent for them, then inquired as to their success.

"We've got 'em dead sure!" answered Extree. "Yer were right, Josie, der other ole gal was Uncle Jonas Tover."

Josie laughed heartily about the way in which the woman had served them, but comforted the boys by saying:

"Well, it was cheap after all."

"Tea," said the newsboys, in a breath, "cheap an' mean!"

"Extree," she observed, "I can run the stand alone—that is for a few days, for mother helps me fold! You and Joe had best clean and go to the Treasury office; I think you're wanted badly."

"Clean," indignantly exclaimed the boys. "Ain't we clean?"

"Scarcely," she merrily replied. "Extree, you've got several lines of Miss Sally about your eyes and neck, and as for you, Joe, you look like a fireman!"

"Right yer are, Josie," laughed Nick, "yer head's allus level."

Towards noon they waited upon the Treasury official, who noted their story down in a book.

"Then you think that Hermann is in Philadelphia?" said the gentleman.

"Yes, Boss," grinned the newsboy; "guess he's gone ter hev a look at Independence Hall."

"Boys," said the official, after thinking a while, "be at the Jersey City Ferry at eight o'clock this evening."

"Plain clothes?" demanded Nick.

"Yes," nodded the gentleman; "you are not afraid to face the gang, are you?"

"Afraid!" said both of them at once; "not much."

That night, Extree, Josie and Joe were on hand at the appointed time and place.

"What's the gal going to do?" said one of the detectives whom they found waiting for them; "hadn't she better go back?"

"No, she's our pard," said Nick; "yer let her go, Mister. She's a hull team when she's roused."

"Very well," answered the officer; so Josie made one of the party.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MAKING A BIG HAUL.

JOSIE had always said that she would be "in at the death," and as the detectives knew she was smart, they did not object to her company.

"Hello!" cried Gum, the news-agent, who came into the car just as the train left the depot; "on der pipe, Extree?"

"Yer bet," nodded our hero.

"How yer do, Josie?" said Gum; "why, yer look perfectly splendid. See yer've lost yer ole man."

"Yes," sighed the girl, "my father is dead."

"Yer here, too, little Joe!" he cried.

"Yea, ole gumsucker!" chuckled Joe, who hated to be called little.

"Where yer bound ter, Extree?" asked Gum, pretending not to hear Joe's chaff.

"Goin' ter give some ob me friends a ser-prise party," winked the newsboy.

"Saw dat yer fixed Mr. Piper," grinned Gum; then turning to Josie, inquired: "Has Extree been inside der stand yet?"

"No," laughingly replied the girl, "he hasn't, but it has been through no fault of mine, for we've asked him in often enough."

"Extree," whispered Gum, bending over him, "der yer know dis car is full of New York cops, in plain clothes. Dere's four reglar detectives among 'em."

"I conteever," winked our hero. "Yer don't fool Nick."

Upon reaching Newark, they were joined by a squad of New Jersey officers, who, like the New York men, were in civilian costume.

They crowded into the car, and soon Extree, Josie and Joe were the center of observation.

"So you're Extree Nick, the newsboy who was given away by those political bummers, Green and Co.?" inquired a tall, handsome man, who proved to be the captain of the Newark party.

"Yea," politely answered our hero. "Low me ter interduce yer ter Miss Josie Perry an me partner, Joe."

"So you're going out to enjoy the capture, Miss," said the captain.

"Yes, sir," replied Josie. "I don't see why my partners," smiling at Nick and Joe, "should have all the fun."

"But there may be danger; they are a desperate gang," remarked the officer.

"I'm used to desperate folks," she laughingly returned, adding, "I don't scare worth a cent."

When they arrived at Elizabeth, it was as dark as pitch, and it took them some time before they could see a yard before them.

The two squads were provided with wagons, while a couple of carriages awaited the heads of the expedition.

Entering their respective vehicles they were driven along Newark Avenue, and, upon reaching the "turn-off," they halted and alighted.

By that time the moon had risen and Extree could make out the road.

First went Nick and Joe, with Josie between them, then, in two bodies, followed the police.

It was past ten when they reached the woman's house, as they had to go very cautiously.

The only light shining was from the window of their late hostess' chamber.

Going down on all fours, Extree crept forward towards the barn, and listened.

It was full of men.

The officers advanced and surrounded the building, then awaited the signal of attack.

"Extree," said the captain of the New Jersey force, "ask Miss Josie to knock at the door, and when they hail her, to reply: '*A lady friend*.'"

Nick went to where he had left Joe, and the girl, and told her, whereupon she immediately advanced and tapped upon the barn door.

"Hello!" cried a gruff voice. "Who's there?"

"*A lady friend*!" replied Josie. "Come out."

The man, a notorious burglar, was caught by the snare, and, cautiously opened the barn door, slipped out, when he was immediately seized and secured; meanwhile the fellows in the barn, wondering who had called for him, and inquisitive as to the lady visitor being pretty, quietly rose, one after the other, and followed like sheep; each of them being grabbed as they reached the outside and gagged in order to prevent any alarm being given.

When they were all caught, Extree and the captain entered the building and found the first floor empty.

"Now for the birds perched aloft," whispered the officer, and beckoning the New York detectives in, he moved towards the ladder. As he did so, Nick went up like a cat and vanished in the hay-loft.

He was bound to lead. Up climbed the officers. "Hist!" went the boy. "They're asleep. Give me a light." They handed him a bulls-eye lantern, and he cautiously flashed it upon the hay. There slumbered Green, but Jonas Tovor was nowhere to be seen.

"Come, git up, Mister," shouted Extree, giving the man a contemptuous kick. "Where's yer derved ole pard?"

"How?" cried the ex-detective, half rising. "My gracious! how did you come here? You ain't one of us?"

"I?" grinned the newsboy; "no, thank yer. Where's me noble Mr. Tover?"

"In Philadelphia," said the man, who was only about half awake, and who did not see the officers. "Say, who are you, anyhow?"

"Me?" I'm Extree Nick, der New York newsboy. Der chap yer an' Tover and der crowd tried ter give away. It's my turn now. I've come ter give yer a little surprise party."

In another moment Green was secured. "Sold," he muttered; "sold, an' by a derved newsboy."

"Yea," chuckled Extree; "yer makes four of me enemies. Yer kin scratch yer ear an' trotter Sing Sing;" then, turning to the officers, he said: "Now, go ter der other barn and find der mashes wid which dey makes der nickles."

"How do yer know anything about it?" snarled Green.

"Bless yer, I've bin watchin' yer fur weeks," laughingly answered Nick. "Yer piped me once, me noble Green, when I wasn't a thief. I've sworn ter bring yer where yer put me, an', by thunder, I'll do it."

The prisoner was about to reply, when the officers gagged him and conducted him below.

"How many have ye caught?" demanded Joe, who had left Josie for an instant.

"Twenty-three, said Extree. "We've scooped em in dis time."

"Yer've sold us bad," said one of the party, a celebrated bond forger. "Blamed if that woman-decoy didn't draw us out like a lot of rats."

Proceeding to the house, Nick summoned the farmer's wife, who, thrusting her head out of the chamber window, snapped:

"Is that you, Jack?" "Yes," whispered the scamp. "Come down; danger!"

"All right," she answered, while Josie, who was seated on the porch, almost laughed outright.

Presently the front door was opened, and the woman appeared in her night-garments, yawning and looking about half awake.

"Hello!" grinned Extree. "Yer didn't expect us ter night, did yer?" when she awoke completely, and, seizing a big bell began to ring it, screaming:

"Murder! Thienes!" This brought the officers to the spot, and soon the room was full of them.

"You wretches!" she snapped. "What do you want?"

"A lodging fur dis young lady," quietly answered Nick. "Come, be perlit, ma'am. Yer've entertained us before. I'm one ob der colored gals."

CHAPTER XXXV.

PLAYING IT ON THE FARMER'S WIFE.

At first the woman seemed inclined to cut up rough; but upon the captain telling her who he was, she wilted right down and retired with Josie, who was hurriedly instructed to pump her as to the whereabouts of Miss Riddle.

"I shall stay here to-night," said Extree; "Joe will go wid yer, and ye'd best have me half a dozen officers, fur I think, ef I stays, I kin grab me noble Uncle Tover. Yer see, ef he gets der office, he'll go out west an' turn Injun Camp Supply Agent, an' make his everlastin' fortun'—so I wants ter nab him."

"Very good!" replied the captain. "The Treasury detectives had better stay with you, and I'll leave six of my own men. Tover may show fight. I've und their coining apparatus over in the other barn."

In a short time the wagons were brought from Newark avenue, and the prisoners placed in them.

While the officers were doing this, Extree procured a list of the captured ones, and handing it to Joe, said:

"Now, pard, yer take dis ter our newspaper; conteever?"

"Yea," nodded his companion.

"Tell dem jes what we've did," continued Nick, "an' der editor will jerk it down. Den yer look out fur der extrees—mind."

"I con-teever," winked little Joe. "Yer don't mean ter be euchered dis yer game, hey?"

"I is so!" grinned our hero. "Dis yer biz is growin' excitin', an' I'm goin' ter rest me noble Uncle Tover."

"How'll yer do it?" said Joe. "I'd like ter see yer."

"Yer must tend to der extrees—mind?" urged his pard. "Save one fur Josie—because she has der hull history ob dis affair."

"Come, Joe, if you're coming," shouted the captain, from one of the carriages—the other being left for Josie and Extree. "We're all ready to start."

The newsboys exchanged looks of triumph, and, as Joe quitted the house, Nick said:

"Tell yer mother we'll be home ter dinner."

In a few moments the vehicle rattled away.

"We've found all the plant," said one of the detectives, coming into the room. "They have quite a mint! The cusses, they hid the things so nicely, that unless you had overheard their conversation, we might have searched for a week."

"Where will you sleep?" inquired the newsboy.

"In the further barn, with the machinery and tools," answered the officer. "We must keep our eyes on them, as they are valuable proofs. Good-night."

"Good-night," answered the lady. "We've made a big haul, ain't we?"

"Yes," said the detective, "we owe something to you."

"Something?" laughed Extree; "everything! Yer keant fool Nick."

"You needn't be so uppish," snapped the man, who felt that what our boysaid was true. "You ain't everybody, Extree."

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot," grinned Nick; whereupon the officer retired, swearing inwardly, and the weary boy threw himself upon the lounge.

As he was dropping off to sleep, the farmer's wife quietly descended the stairs and tapped on the door, saying:

"Entree Nick."

"Hello," he cried, rising.

"Can I come in?" she asked.

"Suttinly, lady," he replied.

Softly entering, she advanced, and our hero noticed that she had been weeping.

"What's matter?" he demanded.

"Oh," she whispered, sinking upon her knees, "save my husband; there's a good young feller. Your sister has told me all about you, and that you're one of the colored gals who came here."

"Yea," smiled the boy. "He's one ob dem yer culled pussons yer stuck for a dollar a head. What of it?"

"Save my husband," she pleaded, rising. "He ain't much account, but now them thieves are gone, I kin make him work. When he's sober he's afraid of me."

"I should think so," murmured Extree; while Josie, who was on the stairs, choked a giggle.

"Yes," the affrighted creature continued, "he's like a lamb when there's no one round to give him whiskey. Young feller, he's never jined them coiners, all he's done has been to fetch buttons from Philadelphia; he's innercent."

"Oh, certainly," said Nick, winking at Josie, who had just then peeped in at the door. "If I clear yer husband fur yer, will yer help me?"

"Willingly," she replied. "I'll do anything if you won't touch my man."

"Where does Hermann live?" he quietly asked. "Hermann," she said. "Yes, I guess that's his name. Well, he's boarding somewhere over in Germantown. Say, you won't hurt my man?"

"Look here, lady," he solemnly observed "yer feller has rendered himself liable to State's prison, but if yer'll help me nab me noble Uncle Jonas Trover, I'll not put the cops on yer button—express-man—con-teever? Understand?"

"Yes," she answered: "but how can I? Mr. Trover ain't been here in weeks."

"Miss Riddle has, ain't she?" he laughed, winking slyly at Josie who was cramming her handkerchief into her mouth. "Der aged old Centennial has bin 'roun', hey?"

"Are you going to arrest her?" cried the woman.

"Yea," dryly returned Extree. "She's Uncle Jonas Trover."

"My gracious!" moaned the agitated creature, "an' I loaned him a pair of my corsets."

"Corse-it's a sell fur yer," grinned Nick, who did not intend to make a pun, but Josie noticed it, and almost choked.

"The old wretch!" ejaculated the woman; "he used to come and chat with me for hours—and he a man! Ugh, I'd like to scratch his eyes out?"

"Can't you remember Hermann's address?" quietly inquired Nick; "if yer kin, I'll pass yer husband."

"He lives at a house kept by a German named Rosenberg," she whispered. "Now tell me how you'll save my man. He's coming back by the first train to-morrow morning with that horrid fraud, Miss Riddle."

"I'll tell yer," smilingly replied the newsboy. "What time does der first train arrive at Liza-bett, from Philadelphia?"

"At half after eight," she said.

"What time does der first train leave here fur dere?" he asked.

"At a quarter to seven," she nervously answered.

"We'll go on by dat train, stop at New Brunswick, wait in der depot until der Philadelphia train arrives an' is ready ter start, den get aboard an' nab me noble Tover flyin'! I tell yer Nick'll do der trick."

"And my man?" said the other.

"Oh, yer kin git off at Elizabeth an' scratch yer ears an' trot!" grinned Extree; then addressing Josie, said:

"Yer kin laugh, now—sister!"

The girl contrived to smother her merriment, as the woman turned to her, saying:

"You here? Well, can I trust your brother?"

"With your life," quietly replied Josie. "Extree never lies."

"Very well," said the poor creature, who, between the fever and ague and a drunken husband, had lately had her hands and heart full. "Come, Miss Perry, s'pose we retire and give your brother a chance to sleep; it's past two o'clock."

"Good-night, Brother Extree," said the girl, laughing at him with her eyes.

"Good-night, Sister Josie," returned Nick, winking slyly. "Der surprise party's been a gran' success—con-teever!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TRAPPING TOVER.

WHEN he was once more alone, Extree threw himself on the lounge and chuckled:

"Dern it! I sed I'd bust dem burglars, an' I've done it. Now, ef I kin only scoop in me noble Tover, catch Hermann on der fly, an' run in me ole frien' Budd, I shall hev kept me word—an' ain't a newsboy's word as good as a king's?" with which he turned over and presently slumbered.

At five o'clock he awoke, fresh as a newly-picked strawberry, and, after drumming upon the door to awaken Josie and the farmer's wife, proceeded to wash himself at the kitchen sink, and that done, he quitted the house and walked over to the barn, where he found the officers snoring like swine.

"Come!" he shouted. "Rouse out; der sun is shinin'! Ole Tover's bin an' cleared away all der masheenery!"

"Hey? what?" they cried, springing up anxiously. "Tover been here?"

"He might hev bin here an' scooped in der hull bag ov tricks," laughingly answered the newsboy. "Yer blowed yer trombones loud 'nuf ter droun'd any noise. Come, up yer rise—I've got a job fur yer," with which he briefly told them his plans.

"Good!" said one of the Treasury detectives, "I was thinking of that."

"Dat's why yer slept wid yer mouth an ears so wide open," laughed Nick. "Yer a bully boy—ter think of what I did. Well, I'll go an' stir der lan'-lady up ter bile some ole-rye an' make some ob her famous dollar biscuits. Yer see Extree's bin here afore an' knows der ropes."

Whereupon he returned to the house. The woman was baking, and Josie was fixing the table.

"Oh, Extree," she whispered, "did I do right? I piled it on to her last night, until I scared her almost out of her senses."

"Yer a splendid gal," he admiringly replied, giving her a sly kiss. "Yer've done first-class. Yer a genius, Josie."

In twenty minutes they seated themselves at the table, and were about to fall to, when the newsboy cried:

"Stop! Pony up yer dollars."

"How?" said the woman, turning scarlet.

"Why, yer charged me a dollar fur nothin' when I was a culled pussin', sassed the scamp. Here's yer money."

"Oh, I didn't know you then," she said. "I ain't going to charge you anything fur this."

"Oh, I couldn't take it free gratis," grinned Nick. "What is it worth, ma'am?"

"Say a quarter each," she blushing answered.

Extree paid her—knowing that it made her ashamed of her former overcharge—then pitched in.

After making a hearty meal they started for the depot; Nick driving the ladies, and the officers walking.

Two Jersey policemen were left behind in charge of the premises.

They arrived just in time to catch the Philadelphia train, and, after a rapid run reached New Brunswick, when they alighted and entered the refreshment-room.

"Missus," whispered Nick taking the woman aside. "If yer husband has any ob dem nickels on him tell him ter melt 'em inter bullets."

"I will," she said. "You won't sell me, will you?"

"Yer ain't mine ter sell," he grinned. "If yer was I don't know what I'd do."

"You're so kind," she said, then, listening, observed: "Here comes the cars."

The Philadelphia early train came steaming and screaming up, and from their hiding-place in the waiting-room, the watchers saw Tover, in his woman's dress, sleeping as calmly as though in his arm-chair at home.

"All aboard!" cried the conductor.

"Now, marm, yer git in der center carriage, an' call yer ole man inter der next car," whispered Nick.

The officers not knowing Tover from Adam, required him to be pointed out to them, so as they hurried across the platform, they whispered:

"We'll divide and go to both ends of the train—you, Extree, come forward and let Miss Josie go aft; then we shall nab our man."

Nodding hastily, Nick directed his partner what to do, while the woman entered the middle car.

Waiting until the train was well under way, the newsboy sprang aboard, and, followed by the Treasury detective, proceeded through the cars, saying:

"Not here, not here, not here."

When they entered the center car they beheld a sight that made them smile.

Tover was awake and by his side sat Josie, who, when the woman's husband quitted him, had taken the vacant place; while the other door was guarded by officers.

Uncle Jonas was grinning like a baboon, and leering at Josie, saying:

"So you don't mind an old woman, dearie?"

"No, nor an old man either," she quietly returned, rising and allowing one of the detectives to take her seat; then adding: "Mr. Jonas Tover, I'm proud to have had a hand in fixing you. My name is Josie Perry. I'm the partner of Extree Nick, the newsboy, who has kept his word and brought you to justice."

I am sorry to record that Uncle Jonas made use of some very ungallant language, but it didn't last, for the officers gagged him.

"Well," laughed our hero, who had with sparkling eyes watched Josie's act, and listened to her speech. "So, we've got der ole duck? Well, yer a brick, Josie!"

"I told you I should be of use," she said. "Extree, you'll not be long before you can come into the news-stand. Won't Mr. Tom be proud to hear of this?"

The delighted lad nodded assent, then observed:

"I've got ter scoop in two more, an' den der job is did."

The conductor requested the other passengers to vacate the car, and, locking the door, left the officers and their partners with the prisoner.

At Elizabeth, the farmer's wife alighted with a tall, lean man, who, upon quitting the train, ran off like a deer.

Upon arriving at Newark, Gum, the newsboy, came aboard the cars, shouting:

"Yar, here's ye're extree! Full e-count ob der capture ob two hundred thieves, burglars, an' coiners in der wilds ob New Jersey!" When Extree rapped to him to ask the conductor to admit him, and, when Gum was inside, said:

"Why don't yer say a thousand, yer big blower?"

"Wot yer bin locked in dis keer fur?" demanded Gum.

"Well, yer see," smilingly observed Nick, handing Josie a paper, "we've got der boss skunk ob der crowd, ole uncle—I mean Auntie Riddle Tover."

"Yer don't say!" ejaculated Gum. "Where's der dear ole peanut?"

"Dere," grinned Nick, pointing to the prisoner. "Don't yer get mashed on her, Gum—she's engaged—to der perlice."

"You're a regular detective," admiringly observed the news-agent.

"I said I'd do der trick," winked Extree, glancing at his partner. "What is it, Josie?"

"Oh!" cried the delighted girl, "here's three columns of it, Joe told them the story splendidly. It says the lad Newcomb, who is now famous as 'Extree Nick, the Newsboy,' has shown

more ability than any detective on the police force."

Here she paused and blushed, so Nick took the paper from her, and finished the sentence, which ran:

"And the newsgirl, Josie, who is some day to be Mrs. Extree, has proved herself worthy of a brave, good husband."

Old Tover, who had heard this, groaned

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HUNTING HERMANN.

"THAT will do, Extree," pleaded the blushing girl; so Nick, who loved Josie too well to annoy her, said to Gum:

"We won't keep yer, old chum. Yer orter sell dem papers afore we arrives, fur dey'll put another extree out right away."

"That's so," cried Gum. "Well, I shall look out fur der e-dection wid der news ob der conviction ob Miss Tover," glancing at Jonas. "Yer bet I'll make der train echo when I shouts der verdict dat der judge passes on der crowd. So-long, Josie! So-long, Extree, ole man!" adding in an undertone to the latter: "Yer'll arx me to der wedding, hey?"

"Oh! scratch yer ear an' trot," smilingly replied Nick.

In due time they arrived in New York, and Jonas was committed to the Tombs.

"Josie," said Extree, "you go down ter der newspaper office, and tell 'em der story. Dey'll treat yer like a lady. I must go an' see der Treasuryman, fur I want start for Philadelphia."

"Very well," she replied, and away they went.

The newsboy found the official elated with his success, and, after telling him of the capture of Jonas, Extree said:

"Now, if I kin catch Hermann an' get him ter come without a fuss, der job is did. He's a small German an' I guess I kin fix him."

Giving Nick funds and a letter to the Chief of the Germantown police, the gentleman observed:

"Now, my boy, if you can secure Hermann we can go ahead and try the prisoners. Have you any idea where he is?"

"I recon I kin find out," said Extree. "Hermann first, an' den me noble Mr. Budd."

He ran home, changed his undergarments and brushed up, then, leaving word for Joe, started for Philadelphia, arriving there about five P. M.

After taking a bite of food, he rode out to Germantown, and entering a Dutch drug-store, asked to see the directory.

"I want to find a Mr. Rosenberg, who keeps boarders," he said. "I'll take a sody an' syrup, please."

"Rosenberg, vot keeps boarders?" mused the druggist; thinking aloud. "Dere is only von dat keeps a boarder, vot I know—and his name is Frantz—he lives up dish street—number vortynine—mit a vite marble stoop und a brass knocker—and hish card on der door mit—Rosenberg, Professor ov Magic—ov it. A man live dere—dey call him Hermann."

"Thank yer," said Nick, secretly delighted, "I don't think dat's der feller I want. Yer sody's hunk, boss."

"Hermann's a button-maker," continued the man. "Yes, mine sody's goot, I makes him mine-self."

"Like Hermann does his button money," thought Extree, draining the sour stuff, then addressing the druggist, asked:

"Is Hermann a tall feller wid a boss eye?"

"No," returned the other, "he's a small man, very quiet. He tousant know much English. He makes buttons vor a lifing."

Nick paid for his drink and quitted the store, whistling, "Hold the Fort," then, turning to the left, walked up the street, pausing before forty-nine, a three-story brick house.

Knocking at the door, he inquired of a girl who answered it:

"Mr. Hermann widin?"

"Ya," she replied, "he's sick; up all day yesterday und last night, und drunk too much whisky."

"Mighty foolish av him," grinned Nick, "I'll call agin," with which he walked away and continued his whistling.

Proceeding to Police Headquarters, Extree presented his letter, in which was inclosed a warrant of arrest, issued by the New York authorities.

"So you are the celebrated newsboy detective, Extree Nick, hey?" inquired the superintendent.

"Yes, boss," answered our hero, "I'm der only genuine, original Extree. I'm der boy dat fixed Miss Tover."

"What can I do for you?" asked the other.

"Send an officer ter bag Hermann," quietly replied our boy.

"But we cannot find him," said the chief.

"It took Nick ter do dat trick," chuckled Extree.

"Do you know where he is?" demanded the official.

"Yer bet I do," grinned the lad. "I smelled him out."

"How?" sternly demanded the gentleman.

"I went where der limburger kase and schweitzer was der strongest, av eourse," sassed the newsboy. "Yer don't tink I looked fur him among der perleece, do yer, boss?"

"Are you giving me cheek?" snapped the other.

"Bless yer, no, boss," he smilingly retorted. "I'm called der perlitest newsboy in New York."

"Humph!" snorted the man, striking a bell that stood upon his desk, and summoning an attendant.

"Sor!" said the latter, saluting.

"Send an officer with a warrant to arrest one Hermann, who is wanted in New York. This boy will show the way."

"Good-evening, boss," cheerfully observed Extree.

"Go to—blazes!" snarled the official. "Dern you, you've more confidence than a man."

This tickled Nick, who wanted to make the superintendent mad.

It isn't every newsboy who has an opportunity to sass a chief of police, and Extree enjoyed the fun.

They detailed a solid-looking, six-foot officer to accompany him; whereupon Nick said:

"Come along, little un. I won't hurt yer!" but the man didn't see the joke, and merely replied:

"Ja—I'm coom in."

"Did yer ever drink lager?" asked Extree, as they marched for the street car.

"Ja!" said the officer, brightening up. "I like lager, it ish goood!" thinking that the boy was going to treat.

"I thought so," calmly returned Nick, looking him straight in the eye. "Yer awful puffed out in der stummick! I tort it was from swillin' beer."

"Mein Gott!" groaned the man, "dese American poys has sheek," then subsided.

Upon reaching number forty-nine, the lad paused and rang the bell, and, when the girl appeared, said:

"Don't yer be frightened, siss. Dis yer's a cop come ter rest Mr. Hermann. Which is his room?"

"Owh!" she cried, falling back in a fainting fit, seeing which the policeman ruefully scratched his head.

"Come, me noble," urged Nick; "she's all O. K; leave her alone. She's only scared wid seein' yer great, ugly face."

Then, mounting the stairs, he entered a parlor and began to look around him.

The policeman followed, saying:

"Dish ish ein goood German hous."

"Yer bet it is," whispered Extree. "Kean't yer smell der cookin'?"

They walked through into an extension-parlor; but no one was to be seen.

"Up yer come, Schneider," said Nick. "Yer bet he's on der top floor. Now fur a glimpse av der button-maker."

Mounting the stairs, they proceeded to examine the sleeping-rooms, then finding them empty, ascended to the top floor, the front apartment of which was unfurnished.

"Der feller is in der back lodgin'," whispered Extree, trying the door, which proved to be locked on the inside.

"Say, jes' sling a little Dutch at him."

The policeman whanged at the panels with his fist, crying:

"Hermann! Hermann! Kom!" (come.)

No reply.

"Hermann!" thundered the ponderous Dutchman, giving the door another rousing blow, "Kom, kom!"

Still no answer.

"Blame it," said the newsboy. "I hope he ain't dead."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BAGGING THE BUTTON-MAKER.

THE police officer raked his head with his fingers, as much as to say:

"What's to be done now?"

"Bust in der door," suggested Extree; "jes yer lean yer lager beer bar'l agin it, mister, an' der job is did. Con-teever?"

"Vot?" demanded the cop.

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot," laughed the boy; then, motioning him aside, cried: "Nick'll do der trick," and raising his right knee, he placed it against a panel and burst the lock, as a horse-rider does the paper of a hoop.

Entering the room, they lighted the gas, and beheld a small, wiry-looking man, who was stretched out upon the bed.

"Dead?" gasped Nick.

"*Tead trunk!*" solemnly returned the German officer. "*Ja*, he's full;" with which he sighed, as much as to say, "Ah, how I envy him!"

"Pick him up," said Extree. "Yer big an' ugly enough ter be able ter truck him to der station-house."

"Nein," answered the man. "He too heavy! I vake him op, an' he valk;" whereupon he grabbed the intoxicated coiner by the schuller, and bellowed, "*Kom, Hermann, kom, kom, kom!*"

After shaking him like a bottle of medicine, until he frothed at the mouth, the cop said:

"He too trunk," hearing which, the newsboy remarked:

"Oh, yer a bully boy ter rouse a dead-tight. Here, le' me take a han? I'll try Josie's patent—*conteever*."

In a bowl by the bedside was a large lump of ice, which Extree laid in a towel and mashed, then preparing some arctic-cold water, he wetted the cloth and slapped it over Hermann's head, neck and chest.

"You vet der bed," observed the policeman.

"Wet your grandmother's tom-cat!" grinned Nick, taking some of the pounded ice and placing it on the drunken man's head.

"Here, lift him up; I want ter slam some ob dis yer cure down his back."

The officer obeyed, and Extree dexterously slipped a cold towel down Hermann's spine; whereupon the prisoner said, in a faint, muddled tone:

"*Was ist es?*" (what is it?)

"A nice little corpse-rouser," grinned Nick, sprinkling the now fast reviving coiner. "How yer vas? *Donner und blitzen! Pretzels! Lager beer und kase! Nix-co, ner-rows! Scratch yer ear an' trot. Dern yer!* I kin speak yer language."

"*Was!*" ejaculated the man, sitting bolt upright.

"*Was ist es?*"

"Now yer licks me," said Extree, shaking his head. "My German don't run ter dat," and, turning to the policeman, laughingly said:

"Say, Schneider, jerk a little more Dutch?"

The cop seated himself and interrogated the frenched man, Nick listening and watching like a terrier, murmuring:

"Knocks me, dat yer German chinning does. Dere's too much *rashen naschen* in it fur Extree. Der feller must hev bin tight dat fust talked it."

The men chatted on and on, like two old friends, until Nick put in his word, inquiring what their conference was about.

The officer looked at his prisoner, observing:

"He didn't do nothings."

"I know," winked the newsboy, "he's der innercent one, he is."

"He say," continued the cop, "he thought dat he making buttons!"

Extree chuckled, then said, in a dry tone:

"He'll make buttons enough when he gets afore Judge Racket. Pshaw! yer don't fool Nick wid dat cuffer—*conteever*."

"Vot you mean?" demanded the policeman.

"Oh, bring along der prisoner, it's getting late," sassed Nick. "Yer ain't at a spellin' bee—*conteever*," then addressing Hermann, said: "Now, me noble button-maker, up yer git; yer wanted in New York."

The coiner said something to the officer, who solemnly observed to Extree:

"But he says he tousant vant to go, and he tousant have done nothings."

"Oh, yer jes' scratch yer ear an' trot him outer dis!" snapped the newsboy, who was getting riled. "One would tink yer was der prisoner's lawyer instead ov a Germantown cop. Yer kean't fool Nick!"

The man said something to Hermann, who sprang from the bed and made a dive for the door, but Extree was too quick for him and had him as a black-and-tan does a rat.

"Oh, oh!" screamed the coiner; while the cop looked on as much as to say, "fight it out—it's none of my affair."

Tripping up his prisoner, the lad closed the door, and addressing the officer, said:

"You big, fat, cow-headed, beer-soaked loafer you, if yer don't put der bracelets on dat snoozer, I'll go fur yer next."

"Vot," growled the man. "Don't you see dat Hermann hasn't done nothings? He tell me, so help him sacred vord, he tink he vos making buttons. Him innocent."

"Oh, too thin!" sneered Extree. "Yer kean't fool Nick! See here, if yer don't waltz him right in I'll have yer sent up fur helpin' a thief who has robbed poor folks. I mean it, Mister Man."

The truth was, Hermann was a friend of the officer, who, though thick-skulled, was honest enough. You cannot expect a man, who has only been in the States a year, to know much about our laws, and the cop, thinking that his countryman was the victim of a conspiracy, naturally objected to assist in prosecuting him.

"Let him change his clothes," he observed to Nick. "You see he come out all right. He von very goot man. He go to school mit me in Germany. He no thief. He say von man name Tover tell him to make buttons fur der Fiith Regiment of infantry. He not know dat he make nickell five cents."

"If he didn't he ain't got no more sense dan yer hev!" grinned Extree, watching the man dress in dry garments. "Eider you must be a couple ov fools, or yer take Nick fur one."

The policeman shrugged his shoulder, saying: "Vell, you see, Hermann get off. He tink he was making buttons."

"Why didn't he put der shanks on dem?" sneered the newsboy, keeping a bright eye on Hermann.

"Vell, you see," solemnly replied the cop, "der man Tover say he do dot at his New York factory. Hermann been blayed on by dot Tover. He no know he do anything wrong."

Hermann had been sent out of the way to Philadelphia, and the partly-finished buttons forwarded to him to polish and electro-nickel.

Filling a good-sized basket with the stuff and tools, the newsboy said:

"Now, Mr. Officer, yer carry dat and I'll tend ter yer ole school-feller, der button-maker." Then, taking Hermann's hand, he conducted him downstairs, the copper following, lugging along the heavy load.

On reaching the police-station the coiner was consigned to a cell, and Extree was told that the man would be duly sent on to New York.

By that time it was quite late, finding which, the lad telegraphed: "Got Hermann," to Josie; then went to a hotel and rested for the night.

He wanted rest badly, so he slept like a young bear.

In the morning he started for New York, reaching his lodgings about noon.

Josie was there, evidently awaiting his arrival.

Noticing that she seemed to be somewhat agitated, he saluted her, saying:

"Nothing wrong, is there, Josie?"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Oh, Extree," said the girl, "I scarcely know whether to laugh or cry; Mr. Rudolph said that something would come of it."

"Laugh, honey," he replied, stealing his arm about her waist. "Yer was made fur dat. What der yer refer ter?"

"You remember the old marble-masher," she began, her eyes twinkling as she spoke.

"Shall I ever forget the blamed old gewse?" he grinned. "Well, what of him—has he wrote yer again?"

"He's dead!" she returned.

"Oh, yer don't fool Nick wid dat yarn," laughed her lover. "I've bin dere, Josie."

"It's a fact," she quietly observed, "and what is more, he has left me all his money, *provided*," here she glanced slyly at him, "that I keep single until I'm twenty-one."

"Bully fur de ole man!" cried Nick. "*We kin wait!*"

"We, Mr. Impudence?" she teased, adding, "but that ain't all; he not only wishes me to do this, but I am not to have the fortune if I marry Extree Nick, the newsboy."

"Dern his old picture!" muttered our hero; then looking quietly up at her, said: "Well, Josie, what did yer tell him?"

"He's dead!" she gravely answered. "If he'd been alive I—well, what do you think I would have told him, Extree?"

Here she looked merrily at him.

"Terscratch his ear and trot," he cried, giving her a hearty kiss. "Bless yer, Josie; I know yer true grit. Yer love me better den all der money in der world."

"You're cool," she teased. "Well, you haven't heard all, Mr. Sass. If I refuse his offer he's left me a tombstone, or a monument, or whatever you call it. I'm to take my pick, and this morning his brother and sisters brought a whole crowd of children to our news-stand and cried and carried on, saying, 'Oh, don't take our rights from us, darlin' Miss Josie. Have de monny-mint, allanna?' so I told them that I wouldn't rob them, as I knew of a young man who was saving up a fortune for me."

"Dat's Extree," whispered our hero, giving her a hearty kiss.

"Perhaps it is," she laughingly replied. "Well,

you bad boy, I informed them that I wouldn't touch a cent of the old man's money, whereupon they all went down on their knees on the sidewalk, and blessed me, until Joe came up, when I slipped away round here to tell you. Oh, it was too touching to hear them say: 'Take de monument, darlin'; take it, an' yer road on earth will be aisy, an' yer bid in Heaven wan of roses.'"

Extree smiled, saying:

"I'm awful glad yer took der monny-mint, Josie; will do to go over yer poor father." Then, after thinking awhile, he observed: "S'pose we buy a family plot, and move our dead."

Josie nodded; it was what she had set her heart on.

The old marble-masher's money was in her eyes nothing to Extree's love, and they laughed to think that he had imagined he could part them.

"So you've caught Hermann?" she said. "I received your telegram!"

"Yea!" he chuckled. "I've bagged der button-maker. He says dat he thought he was makin' buttons for der Fifth Regiment ov der United States Hoss Marines."

"Too thin!" laughed the girl. "The other prisoners are all wanted on various old charges, and are now safe in Albany. The *Herald* says that you have been the means of breaking up the refuge of the most formidable gang of scoundrels that ever operated in New York."

"Dat's mighty han'som' ov der *Herald*," he merrily answered.

"One good turn deserves another. We'll give dem our ad-wertizin'."

They quitted the house together and walked up Broadway to the news-stand, where they found Joe and Mrs. Perry.

"Hello, pard," cried Nick, and soon the boys were shaking hands, after which our hero said to the old lady:

"How is der fruit biz, mother?"

"I'm doing well," she said. "Did Josie tell ye that she'd refused a fortune?"

"Yea," winked Nick. "But don't you worry, mother, we kin get along widout der ole fraud's money; an' he's left us a marble monnymint; yer must tink ov dat."

Mrs. Perry appeared somewhat comforted by this, and returned quite cheerfully to her fruit-stand, muttering:

"Sure an' I belave Josie was right after all. He's a brave, bowld boy, is Extree."

That afternoon Nick served the papers on the up-town route, and, as he was walking homeward, espied a red-headed and bearded young man who was endeavoring to trap some youngsters into committing a theft.

Taking a ten-cent scrip the fellow tucked it loosely into his change pocket and sauntered along the street to where some young newsboys were playing marbles.

The stamp fluttered about so plainly that the lads saw it at a glance, and one of them said, by way of a joke:

"He's got more money den he kin take care ov."

"Wipe his eye ov it fur a lark," suggested another.

Extree moved quietly forward.

"Bet yer a cent yer kean't take it widout he knows it," cried a third.

"Bet yer I'll take it an' shoye it back right under his derved nose," said a fourth. "I'm no thief, but I'm up ter a blessed lark like dis."

The red-haired young man heard all that they said, but he lingered round the speaker until the latter backed, and, placing his hand behind him, whipped off the stamp; then, exhibiting it to his companions, was about to return it, when his tempter grabbed him and shouted:

"Police! Police!"

Extree sprang forward, and wrenching the boy from his grasp, addressed the fellow, saying:

"Yer wretch, I saw yer bait dat trap."

The boys scooted, and the man nervously observed:

"I—I—I was only joking."

At the sound of his voice, Nick took a good look at him, then quietly remarked:

"Me noble Budd, hey? So it's *you*, you thundering sneak;" after which, grabbing at the red beard and wig, he tore them off the fellow's face.

Sure enough, it was Budd Ketchum.

"Och," howled the cur, beginning to cry like a child, "I was only foolin'. Le'me go."

"Not much I won't," chuckled Nick, "me noble Mr. Budd. I've hed me eye on yer all der time. Now," tearing the fellow's suspenders out and lashing his hands behind his back, "yer kean't scratch yer ear, but yer can trot along wid der boy yer tried ter give away! *Con-tee-ver*."

"But my pants will slip down," whined the creature.

"Hold 'em up behind," grinned Extree; "yer kean't run fur as I've fixed yer;" then nodding.

at the newsboys, who had gained courage and returned, said: "Yer see, chaps, Nick has done der trick; dis feller tried ter give yer away as he did me, only he didn't play der stamp game on Extree!"

"Rah!" shouted the little fellows, "bully fur yer, Nick!"

Extree walked Budd every blessed step of the way down town to the City Hall, and by the time he reached the building he had about three hundred newsboys following him, shouting:

"Rah! He's got Budd Ketchum."

"Yea," winked our hero, as he handed over his prisoner, "*me noble Budd makes up der tally.*"

CHAPTER XL.

BEFORE THE JUDGE.

It was a cold December day when Jonas Tover, Henry Green, James Piper, Harvey Snell, Fritz Hermann and Buddington Ketchum were placed at the bar of justice, charged by the Government of the United States with the crime of making and uttering spurious money, to wit, five-cent pieces.

By direction of the recorder, four hundred newsboys were admitted to the court-room, after which every vacant spot was crowded with ladies.

The case created the most intense interest, and reporters came from other cities in order to obtain early news with regard to the trial.

Tover had manufactured over half a million dollars worth of the spurious nickels, and had flooded the country with the stuff.

About ten o'clock the judge took his seat and the trial began with an address by ex-Judge Smart, who was the leading counsel for the Government.

In a concise speech he sketched the career of the prisoners, and informed the court that he had witnesses who would testify to their guilt; then seated himself, upon which a noted criminal lawyer, who was retained for the defense, rose and said that his clients were persecuted, and were as innocent as unborn babes.

After this they pleaded "Not guilty."

When the buzz and excitement had died away, the usher called the first witness.

"Nicodemus Newcome, *alias* Extree Nick," and after taking the oath, Extree seated himself in the chair.

Josie was at the counsel-table dressed like a lady, and beside her sat Joe, grinning from ear to ear, while, in the body of the court, the upturned faces and open mouths of the newsboys were a sight to see.

Casting a glance at the prisoners, our hero winked at Josie, as much as to say:

"Fixed 'em, hey?" then prepared to give his evidence.

All that day and the next, and far into the third afternoon, Extree sat and replied to the questions put to him by the counsel and recorder, and, little by little, like the piles of counterfeit five-cent pieces ranged from time to time upon the table, he heaped the evidence before them, telling his story as a person who knows that he is relating the truth.

The proofs of the evidence, which he had carefully marked, were handed round and examined, and his wonderful skill as a detective brought out.

When he quitted the stand a murmur of applause arose from the spectators.

Sadie Piper's change for a quarter, marked "No. 1," the one cent, dropped by Budd, marked "I. P.," the roll of five-cent pieces given him by the murderer Bill, marked "B.," the quarter's change from the rag-and-bone man, the other marked coins, and all the machinery arrayed in proof of his truthfulness, the prisoners grinding their teeth with rage to think that they had been outwitted by a newsboy.

Joe next gave his evidence, and came off with flying colors; then Josie was called, and she told all that she knew, amusing the court with her smart reply to the prisoner's counsel, who asked her:

"Why did you wish to be present at the capture of Mr. Tover?"

To which she said:

"Because he had injured and insulted my partner, Extree Nick! Wasn't that reason enough? *If we are only news-sellers we are proud, and won't be trampled on!*"

Hearing this, the newsboys present gave three cheers; after which the usher cried:

"Order in the court!"

"You seem to think a good deal of your partner," bullied the counsel, who had asked her several impudent questions.

"It's more than I do of you!" she smilingly retorted. "Extree is worth a dozen old stupid like yourself." Adding quietly: "Any more questions to ask me?"

"No," said the lawyer; "I don't think much of your evidence."

"You needn't worry yourself," she quickly replied, for her dander was up over his reference to Nick. "You're no judge, and I didn't ask for your opinion."

Everybody in the court roared at this, and the lawyer was about to say something bitter, when the judge enjoined silence.

"Extree," whispered the girl, as she took her place by his side, "I could not help getting mad."

"Yer did splendidly!" he proudly whispered. "I tell yer der lawyer feels like a parbiled lobster."

The trial lasted over a fortnight, and a great number of witnesses were called; among them being Gum and his brother, the popcorn man, and the Treasury detective.

On the morning of the eighteenth day, Extree, Josie, Joe, Mr. Tom McNally, Mrs. Rudolph, and Mrs. Perry were accommodated with seats at the table, and Recorder Rackett began his summing up by saying:

"It is seldom that I have to draw the attention of a jury to such a complete case as this, and one that so greatly affects the interests of poor people. The prisoners at the bar have for years been engaged in manufacturing and issuing spurious money of a low denomination, and their victims have uniformly been those who most use small sums—the poor, who live by the sweat of their brow."

"Tover, the chief, has purchased and fitted machinery for coining, and the evidence against him is as clear as day."

"Piper, Snell and Green, all of them formerly political members of our much-abused police force—a service they successfully used as a cover for their rascality—stand convicted without a shadow of doubt."

"Hermann, according to the evidence, is a smart, clever workman, who has been employed by Tover to manufacture shankless buttons for the United States Army. It is for you to decide whether this is true. He certainly has been imposed upon, and his record in Germany is a good one."

"Ketchum the meanest of the gang, deserves little comment, as he has confessed to former convictions in another State of the Union."

"Before closing my summing up, I must draw your attention to the heroic conduct of the chief witness, Nicodemus Newcome, otherwise Extree Nick, and of his partners, Josie Perry and Joseph Rudolph."

"A year ago the prisoners at the bar conspired to defame and ruin the first-named of the three, but through the kindness of their friend, Mr. McNally, the plans of Tover and his associates were marred, and their shameful plot revealed."

"Mark the result! The poor lad—sensitive of his honor as any king—vowed to bring his traducers to justice. It was not sufficient for this newsboy that I should tell him he was innocent—he felt that the verdict of the jury had only half cleared him in the eyes of the world—so he bravely set to work, and, one by one, has caged his traducers, bringing them before his countrymen to decide as to the measure of their crime. Gentlemen of the jury, how say you, guilty or not guilty?"

As he ended, the newsboys in the body of the court breathed again, and Extree turned his sparkling eyes upon his friends, saying:

"I feel awful good! *Conteever?*"

The jury retired, in order to deliberate, and the newsboys began to discuss the judge's charge.

"He's a splendid man," said one. "If a feller is innocent he won't let him be hurt; but, if he did it, der judge gives it him red hot! He spoke up fur Extree, didn't he? Say—" but further remarks were cut short by the usher crying:

"Silence in the court!"

"Extree," whispered Josie, "here they come."

CHAPTER XLI.

EXTREE'S HOUR OF TRIUMPH.

THE jury entered in single file, and, when they had taken their seats, the usher once more cried:

"Silence in the court."

Extree glanced at the prisoners, who scowled savagely back at him.

Judge Rackett waited until a dead silence among the audience, then, addressing the jury, demanded:

"How say you, gentlemen? Guilty or not guilty?"

"Your honor," answered the foreman, "we find as follows: Jonas Tover, guilty on all the counts of the indictment. James Piper, guilty of uttering counterfeit coin. Harvey Snell, guilty of uttering counterfeit coin. Henry Green, guilty of uttering counterfeit coin. Fritz Hermann, guilty of manufacturing counterfeit coin, but we recommend him to mercy, as he appears to have

been the victim of Tover. Buddington Ketchum, guilty of aiding Tover in the business of uttering counterfeit coin."

When he had thus delivered himself, the newsboys, who had watched his face and moved their lips as he had done, turned their earnest gaze upon the recorder, who, addressing the prisoners, inquired if they had anything to say, and why sentence should not be pronounced upon them, when they all began talking at once, whereupon he stayed them, observing:

"One at a time. Jonas Tover."

"Your honor," began the old rascal, "I am too indignant to find words with which to express myself. It kills me to think that I have been given away by a derved newsboy like that cub, Extree Nick. New York has come to something when the detectives are set aside, and boys, dressed up as gals, employed to hunt folks up. I demand a fair trial. It's a conspiracy against me because I was a news-stand owner."

The judge waited patiently until the coiner had spoken, then quietly said:

"Harvey Snell."

"I agree with Jonas Tover," sullenly replied the man. "It's an infernal plot; a trap laid by Extree Nick."

"Henry Green," calmly nodded the judge.

"It's all a little game of the detectives," growled the fellow. "They never would have caught us but for that cursed newsboy."

"James Piper," said the unmoved recorder.

"Your honor," whined the man, "I'm as innocent as a child. That boy, Extree Nick, has lied right through the piece."

"Fritz Hermann," ejaculated the judge, but Fritz only shook in his pants, and murmured:

"Me make but-tons."

This made the spectators grin, while Josie whispered to Extree:

"I'm sorry for that man."

"So am I," replied Nick. "Listen, der judge is speaking ter me noble Budd."

"Buddington Ketchum," sternly inquired the recorder, "what have you to say why sentence should not be passed on you?" when the sneak-thief foamed at the mouth and fell down in the dock; as he did so, Joe rose, and, addressing the judge, said:

"Yer honor, Budd ain't in *no fit*; I saw him put a bit of soap inter his mouth an' chew it!" hearing which one of the officers half choked the dodger until his jaws gaped, when out dropped a piece of prison soap.

This caused the newsboys to laugh, whereupon the judge bade the usher to call the court to order, then proceeded to pass sentence.

Every eye was turned towards him, and you might have heard a fly buzz.

"Jonas Tover," began the recorder, "I have to sentence you to imprisonment for twenty years. Your crimes have brought their just reward;" then, speaking to the ex-detectives collectively, he said: "Harvey Snell, Henry Green and James Piper, I sentence each of you to ten years imprisonment. I am sorry that I cannot award you a longer term."

Extree never moved a muscle; he was not revengeful, and merely felt that he had done his duty.

"Buddington Ketchum," said the recorder, looking severely at the sneak thief, "I sentence you to five years' imprisonment. When you have served your term in Sing Sing you will be delivered to the authorities of the State of Pennsylvania, who will imprison you for the unexpired time of your sentence—you being an escaped convict."

Joe glanced meaningfully at Extree, who murmured:

"Jus' tink ob dat; an' I once made a chum ov him."

"Now," gravely continued the judge, regarding the affrighted German, who was shaking like a flag in a stiff breeze, "I come to you, Fritz Hermann."

"Der innercent button-maker," breathed Nick to Josie, while the recorder went on:

"You have had a fair trial and been found guilty; but taking into consideration your former good character and your generally innocent bearing, also your ignorance of the American language, I feel inclined to pass a light sentence upon you. That you believed you were engaged in the manufacture of shankless buttons appears to be almost incredible; yet you have displayed so much sympathy in all your actions that I merely sentence you to one year's imprisonment. You have had a very narrow escape. When you quit the prison return to your native land." When the sentence was translated to the affrighted man, he exclaimed in his own language:

"Thank Heaven! I did believe that I was making buttons."

"One moment," calmly observed the judge, glancing at Extree, Josie and Joe. "In closing

this case I must express my admiration of the courage, perseverance, ability and devotion of the three witnesses, who have so materially aided in bringing these men," nodding at the prisoners, "to justice. Nicodemus Newcome, I shall recommend the Treasury authorities to pay you the reward of a thousand dollars offered for the conviction of Jonas Tover."

Extree rose, and, glancing at his old enemies, said proudly:

"Yer honor, I don't want no reward. When I was put in prison, called a thief, an' given away, I took a vow dat, as sure as I lived, I'd find out dem burglars, an' bust dem lyin' detectives. Yer honor, I've kept me word. I've got me reward!"

"*Rah! rah! rah!*" wildly shouted the newsboys, while the ladies cried and cheered with joy.

"Remove the prisoners," directed the judge.

When this was done, and quiet restored, the learned recorder, addressing Josie, said:

"Josie Perry, you have rendered your fellow creatures a service, for you have greatly assisted your partner in his dangerous task; as he refuses the reward, I shall recommend that it be paid to you!" hearing which the girl rose, and, in a proud, clear voice, replied:

"Your honor, I thank you for your kind words, but *I did it all for Extree!* I cannot take a reward for helping him." Then, blushing like a moss-rose, seated herself by Nick, and gently pressed his hand.

"Joseph Rudolph," smilingly observed the recorder, for Josie's action had recalled his own courting days.

"Never," cried little Joe, in his shrill voice.

"Say yer honor," whispered Extree to his pard.

"Never, yer honor," grinned the newsboy.

"Joseph Rudolph," said the judge, "you have shown that, though small in stature, you have the heart and spirit of a man! You, at least, will not refuse the reward?"

Joe scratched his head, and, looking comically at his partners, naively said:

"Yer bet I won't, jedge!"

"*Rah!*" roared the newsboys, in the body of the court, while the judge, jury, and ladies freely gave vent to their merriment.

In the midst of the excitement, Josie and Mr. Tom quietly slipped away to the news-stand.

CHAPTER XLII.

OUR HERO ENTERS THE NEWS-STAND.

It was useless to restrain the newsboys' delight, so the judge retired.

"Bravo, Extree!" cheered the lads, passing the barriers, and crowding around him and his companion. "Bravo, little Joe!"

"Where's Josie?" demanded our hero.

"She's gone out with Mr. Tom," sobbed Mrs. Rudolph, who was crying with joy.

"Come," excitedly observed Nick, "I'm goin' ter take me proper place in der ole stand! Boys, come an' see me do it."

The exultant crowd parted and allowed the lads to pass; then when they arrived at the doors, four boys, with drums, headed by big Jemmy, who acted as marshal, began to beat a triumphant *ran-tan-tan* upon their instruments, and to head a procession that was rapidly forming in the City Hall Park.

Seeing the commotion, his honor, the mayor, who had taken a great interest in the trial and was watching the assemblage from one of the windows of the Court House, ordered a squad of police to take charge of the affair; and soon a

dozen stalwart cops joined them, and kept off the fast accumulating crowd of spectators.

"The Hibernians have the service of the officers to clear the way," laughingly remarked his honor. "I'll give the newsboys a turn."

"Just then the editor of a well-known paper for boys, who had been greatly pleased with Extree's behavior, came out of the City Hall, and, seeing how matters stood, inquired:

"Where's your music, big Jemmy?"

"Got der drums," laughed the boy.

"Oh, that won't do for *The Boys of New York*," said the gentleman, who noticed a German band among the spectators; then stepping up to the captain of the police, whispered to him, after which he descended the steps, crossed to where the musicians were standing, and, hastily driving a bargain, engaged them for the occasion.

"*Rah!*" shouted the newsboys, who understood his action. "Three cheers for our newspaper publisher!"

"Now go ahead, boys," cried the gentleman. "There's a band for you. Take Extree back in state, to his news-stand. Way you go."

If ever a boy felt proud it was Extree Nick at that moment.

He was clapping with his old chums on the steps of the City Hall, saying:

"B'ys, I tell yer, I feel good."

Big Jemmy soon got "der boys" into line; then carrying a damp extra—as though fresh from the press—hoisted on a long stick, like a banner, he headed the procession, and gave the word:

"March!"

First walked six officers in open order; then came Big Jemmy bearing the "extra," which he proudly waved; after him were the drummers, playing "The Mulligan Tattoo," then four hundred newsboys, and as many bootblacks, cheering like forty, while following them was the German band, playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" Next, Extree Nick, arm in arm with Joe, who marched on tiptoe, in order to look as tall as his pard; and after our boys marched a mixed army of friends and admirers, and six officers, who guarded the rear.

The afternoon was cold and clear, and Broadway was not overcrowded, so they marched up it in fine order, the lads cheering and being cheered by the spectators who lined the sidewalks.

It was a great occasion for the New York newsboys, and they felt proud of Extree, Josie and Joe.

Many of them had attended the funeral of our hero's father; besides, all of them knew his history, and the vow he had made never to enter his news-stand until he had cleared his character and brought his enemies to justice.

On they marched, and finally reached the office of the Portable Gas Company, when the police took charge of both ends of the block, and the procession closed up.

Above the news-stand was an American flag, while inside the edifice was Josie, weaving a bouquet of white flowers, and smiling as proudly as a queen.

The German band took up its position to the left, and the boys ranged in a dense semicircle about the place, while Mr. Tom McNally advanced to our hero, saying:

"I congratulate you, Extree!"

The band blew itself breathless, then paused and mopped, whereupon Nick advanced to the

door of the stand and knocked, hearing which Josie cried:

"Come!"

He entered, slyly squeezed her hand, and, turning to the delighted crowd, saucily shouted:

"Yar—here yar *Extree!*" when the boys gave a cheer that sounded like the roar of a troop of young giants.

"Three cheers for *Extree Nick!*"

"Three cheers for *Josie Perry!*"

"Three cheers for little *Joe Rudolph!*"

"Three cheers for *Mr. Tom McNally!*"

When the noise died away, the delighted newsboy said:

"I told yer dat Nick would do der trick."

In ten minutes the crowd melted away, and Extree, Josie and Joe set to work as quietly as though they had never had anything to disturb their business.

About two hours afterwards our newsboys were waiting, check in hand, for the extra edition containing the verdict in the case of Tover and his associates.

"Make way fur Extree, der hero ob der hour," cried Big Jemmy, elbowing a path for Nick and Joe.

"Oh, scratch yer ear an' trot," modestly grinned Extree, but it was no use, the boys insisted upon his being served first.

He caught the damp sheet of papers and clambered up the crowded steps, for he was a newsboy heart and soul, and the touch of an "extra" thrilled him like the smell of powder does an old man-o'-war's-man.

Separating half of the sheets he tossed them to Joe, saying:

"Dere yer are, pard. Shute ahead," then started off up Broadway, shouting:

"Yar, here yar, *Extree*, full-e-count ob der trial ob the noble Uncle Tover, de ex-detectives, Piper, Snell an' Green; the sneak-thief, Budd Ketchum, an' der innercent button-maker, Fritz Hermann. Yar, here yar. Full-e-count ob der verdict and der complements ob der judge, ter der witnesses, Extree, Josie an' Joe! Yar, here yar, Extree!"

Our hero was so well known that he sold out long ere he reached his news-stand; however, he kept two copies, which he tucked under his jacket.

When he arrived near Josie, he tossed one of the extras into her lap, then, entering Mr. Tom's office, handed him the other paper, saying:

"Dere, boss, it's all over wid ole Tover. Yer've bin awful kind ter us."

"Extree Nick," said Mr. Tom, rising and pretending to be mad, "if you ever say that again, I'll—"

"Tell me ter scratch me ear an' trot?" merrily inquired the scamp. "Well, Mr. Tom, I'll try not ter say anything more about it; but yer have bin awful good ter me, yer have, an' no mistake; *conteever!*"

"You monkey," laughingly replied Mr. McNally. "There, go and talk to Josie; see," pointing through the window, "she's waiting for you."

"God bless her," murmured the happy newsboy. "She's waiting fur me, so she is. Well," winking at his good friend, "Josie Perry *does think a heap of Extree.*"

And here we must for a time say adieu to our hero, who will some day reappear in a new role, and though no longer a newsboy, will be the same smart, earnest, quick, sassy, happy-go-lucky, fearless man as our old friend, Extree Nick.

[THE END.]

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